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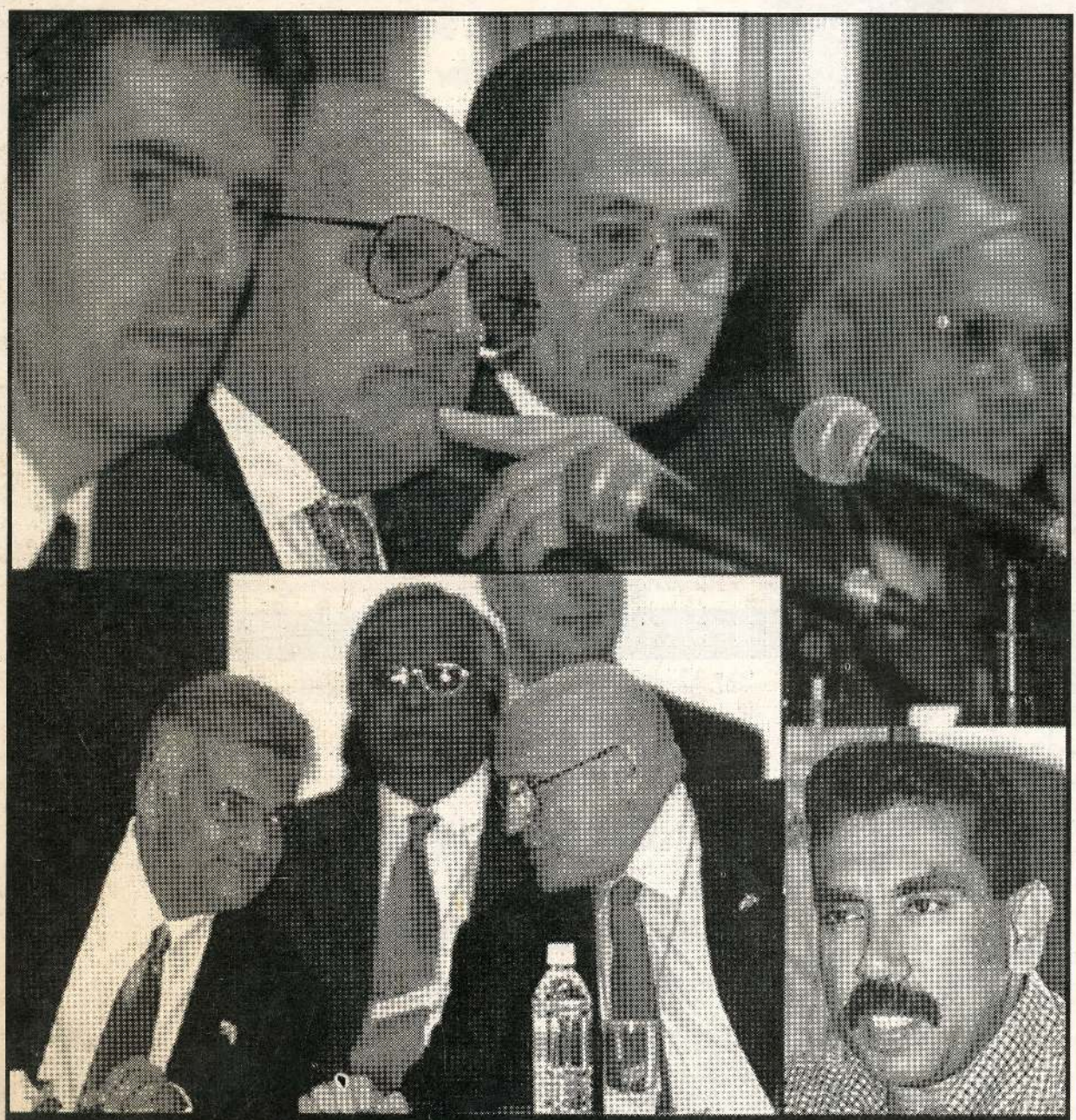

Norway Foreign State Secretary Kjoorbven, US Deputy Secretary of State R. Armitage, Japan special envoy Y. Akashi and Prof. GL Peiris (top); Premier Wickremesinghe and Armitage (bottom left); and T. Subathiran, EPRLF leader killed on 15 June (bottom right).

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"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."
-Voltaire

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editor@tamiltimes.org
admin@tamiltimes.org
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Away with assassinations	03
Tokyo Declaration	04
Towards a better future	07
A magnificient pledge	08
Tigers not bound by Tokyo	09
Navy sinks LTTE ship	10
The post-Tokyo context	11
LTTE response to donor meet	16
Sri Lanka's end game	20
News Track	22
Robert, the Mighty Fighter	34
Bishop Deogupillai	36
Classified	37

Away with assassinations

The "firing of direct and indirect weapons, armed raids, ambushes, assassinations, abductions .... suicide missions and activities by deep penetration units" are prohibited under the Ceasefire Agreement (CA) entered into between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The CA also places a binding obligation upon the parties "in accordance with international law to abstain from hostile acts against the civilian population, including such acts as torture, intimidation, abduction, extortion and harassment."

Since the CA came into force on 22 February 2002, there have been innumerable breaches of these obligations. Many have been highlighted and taken up with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) whose mandate is to ensure compliance with provisions of the CA by the parties. The incidents of violations have included assassinations, abductions, shootings, extortion, intimidation and harassment of people, particularly in the northeast areas of the island, and they have been committed with almost contemptuous disregard of the obligations under the CA. The SLMM has been supremely inefficient or incapable of putting an end to these incidents. Worse still is their incapacity or unwillingness to undertake proper investigations in respect of these incidents.

Invariably the victims have accused the LTTE of committing these violations. Any denial of involvement in these incidents of violence and violations on its part have been received with cynical disdain.

Specially tragic and alarming is the sharp increase in the spate of politically motivated abductions and assassinations in recent months of individuals reportedly belonging or having belonged to non-LTTE Tamil groups or political parties. Reports from reliable sources indicate that over fifty such persons have been murdered since the ceasefire came into effect of which over thirty have been carried out within the last three months. The latest one to join this death-list is the 51-year-old leader of a Tamil political party, EPRLF (V-faction), Thambirajah Subathiran, who fell victim to a sniper in northern Jaffna on the 15th of this month.

Under the Ceasefire Agreement, the non-LTTE Tamil groups were all disarmed, and even the weapons they possessed for personal protection had to be surrendered to the authorities. Unarmed and defenceless, now the leaders and members of these groups appear to have become easy targets to be taken out at will. As one commentator noted, "After the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the LTTE has access to the whole of the country. Therefore its opponents have nowhere to hide. The terror they must be feeling is too horrible to contemplate."

The LTTE is seeking acceptance and legitimacy as representatives of the Tamil people. Such an effort does not necessitate the wholesale elimination of non-LTTE opinion or organisations. By reason of its military position on the ground vis-à-vis the Government, the LTTE has already acquired the distinction of being the only organisation to represent the Tamil people at the peace talks with the Government and at international gatherings. It now wants the Government to agree to an interim 'politico-administrative structure' to be set up under its control for the virtual governance of the northeast of the island. Occupying a position of such distinction and aspiring to exercise powers of government must of necessity imply commitment and adherence to basic internationally recognised norms of democratic conduct, the rule of law, and human rights in all its manifestations. For a start and as a minimum, the LTTE can shed its reputation for politically motivated abductions and assassinations by bringing an end to this cruel and terrifying practice. It needs to demonstrate that it will use the powers it is seeking through the interim arrangement as a trust for the sake of the people and recognising the right of those individuals and organisations that do not toe its line to exist and function within a democratic environment.

It is also important that the government and LTTE sign a declaration guaranteeing basic human and democratic rights providing for international monitoring as justifiably urged by civil rights organisations.

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Tokyo declaration on reconstruction and development of Sri Lanka

Outline of the Conference

1. The Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka was held on June 9 and 10 in Tokyo with the participation of Ministers and representatives from 51 countries and 22 international organizations. The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe made opening statements. The opening session was chaired by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Representative of the Government of Japan.

2. Japan, Norway, the United States and the European Union (Presidency and Commission) functioned as co-chairs of the Conference. Representatives of the co-chairs, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi; State Secretary, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Olav Kjoerven; Deputy Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Richard L. Armitage; Mr. Ioannis Theophanopoulos, representing the Presidency of the European Union; and Mr. Bernhard Zepter, representing the European Commission, delivered statements at the opening session. The President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Tadao Chino also delivered a statement at this session, followed by a video message from the President of the World Bank, Mr. James Wolfensohn.

3. In the operative session, the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Mr. A. S. Jayawardena reported on economic developments and prospects of Sri Lanka. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank reported on Sri Lanka's macro-economic performance and the reconstruction and development agenda of Sri Lanka. The ADB and the United Nations (UN) system reviewed the "Needs Assessment" of the North and East prepared by the World Bank, the ADB and the UN system in full consultation with the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Civil society organizations were consulted during this process.

4. In the plenary session, participating countries and international organizations presented statements which identified their intention to provide economic assistance to Sri Lanka. Presentations were made on the contributions of civil society organizations and of private enterprise to the development objectives of the country.

History of the Sri Lankan Peace Process

5. The armed conflict in Sri Lanka in the last two decades has claimed more than 65,000 lives, and has resulted in more than 800,000 internally displaced persons and a large number of refugees from the North and East. The current peace process commenced in 2000, when Sri Lankan President, Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, and LTTE leader, Mr. Vellupillai Pirapaharan, asked Norway to serve as the impartial facilitator for peace negotiations. The Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE entered into a mutual cease-fire agreement on February 23, 2002, with the able facilitation by Norway. Since September 2002, six sessions of talks have been conducted between the two parties and significant progress has been achieved. Participating countries and international organizations, which met in Oslo on November 25, 2002, committed themselves to providing immediate humanitarian assistance in support of the peace process. In April 2003, a pre-Tokyo Seminar was held in Washington DC chaired by the US Deputy Secretary of State with a view to building political momentum for the Tokyo Conference.

Objectives of the Conference

6. The objectives of the Conference are to provide the international community with an opportunity to demonstrate its strong and unified commitment to the reconstruction and development of Sri Lanka and to encourage the parties to redouble their efforts to make further progress in the peace process. While only one party to the peace process is present at the Conference, the international community takes the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to support the establishment by the parties of the necessary administrative structure for the effective reconstruction and development of the North and East. A partnership between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE will be necessary to rebuild these areas effectively. Adequate safeguards to secure the interests of all other communities should be included in this framework.

7. The Conference takes note of the economic challenges faced by the country and in this context endorsed the Government's "Regaining Sri Lanka" initiative, which is a comprehensive programme to develop Sri Lanka on a balanced and equitable basis.

8. Participants express their regret over the absence of the LTTE from the Tokyo Conference. The Conference provides the Government of Sri Lanka with an opportunity to reaffirm its determination to pursue the peace process, and focus on the reconstruction and development of Sri Lanka.

Importance of the Conference in Promoting the Peace Process

9. Participants express the view that a negotiated settlement in Sri Lanka will be a landmark achievement with regard to peaceful resolution of an armed conflict. The Conference commends both parties for their commitment to a lasting and negotiated peace based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the Conference stresses the importance of bringing tangible dividends of peace to all the people of Sri Lanka.

Balanced Humanitarian and Economic Assistance

10. The Conference notes the importance of urgent humanitarian assistance as well as medium to long-term assistance to rebuild the conflict-affected areas in the North and East, and to assist in the development of the entire country. The Conference emphasizes the importance of taking full account of the delicate ethnic and geographical balance in providing assist-

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ance. The Conference welcomes the "Needs Assessment" of the North and East, which identified needs in the conflict-affected areas. The donor community expresses its willingness to extend assistance to Sri Lanka based on the source material provided for the Conference namely,"Regaining Sri Lanka", the "Needs Assessment" of the North and East, the "Needs Assessment" for the conflict-related districts adjacent to the North and East, and the Bridging Document, which links the "Needs Assessments" and "Regaining Sri Lanka".

Support Indicated by the Donors

11. The participating donor countries and international organizations have demonstrated their willingness to extend assistance to the entire country, to a cumulative estimated amount, in excess of US $ 4.5 billion over the four year period, 2003-2006. In addition, some countries and international organizations have offered technical support. Others have indicated that their commitments are based upon an assumption of a viable peace process.

12. Several countries and international organizations have specified significant part of their assistance to the North and East. A number of them have indicated that disbursement of such assistance will keep pace with satisfactory progress in the peace process; and others have indicated that, given such progress, they would be willing to consider making additional commitments.

Channels of Assistance to the North and East

13. The international community remains committed to supporting humanitarian relief and human rights protection, and takes the opportunity to encourage the parties to reach agreement on an innovative administrative structure for the reconstruction and development of the North and East. The international community also reiterates its commitment to cooperate with the parties for this purpose. This structure will itself contribute to the process of reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The Conference recognizes with satisfaction that implementation of some humanitarian assistance projects is already taking place in the North and East through bilateral and multilateral channels in cooperation with local and international NGOs. The Conference also welcomes the establishment of the "North-East Reconstruction Fund (NERF)", which is to be administered by the World Bank, as an important channel for assistance to the North and East. The Conference also emphasizes the need for flexibility by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in accepting various forms of assistance from the donor community. The donor community also expresses its willingness to assist capacity building to enhance good governance so as to ensure accountable, transparent, speedy and efficient implementation of projects supported with its assistance.

Importance of Strong and Growth Oriented Macro-Economic Policy

14. The Conference notes that it is imperative for the Government of Sri Lanka to implement the sound macro-economic policy delineated in "Regaining Sri Lanka". The Conference stresses the need to adopt economic policies aimed at reducing poverty. Sustainable development also depends upon economic growth and job creation as well as encouragement of private enterprise.

Progress of the Peace Process

15. The Conference notes that during the past sessions of the peace talks, significant progress was achieved. Donors remind the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE of the importance for both parties to make their utmost efforts to further promote the peace process founded upon the principles reflected in the Oslo Declaration. Donors recognize the urgent need to support the people in the conflict-affected areas of the North and East, and make allocations towards this purpose. With regard to the North and East, priority-setting and project-implementation will take place with the Government working in partnership with the LTTE, and with adequate safeguards for the interests of all communities. The Conference expects that the government will ensure that the assistance pledged by the donor community to the reconstruction and development of the North and East is utilized specifically for that purpose.

16. The Conference also urges the parties to move expeditiously to a lasting and equitable political settlement. Such a settlement should be based upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In this regard, the Conference looks forward to the parties reaching early agreement on a human rights declaration, as discussed at the sixth session of peace negotiations at Hakone.

17. The Conference welcomes the LTTE's commitment to the negotiated peace process, and urges the LTTE to return to the peace talks as soon as possible. The people in the conflict-affected areas of the North and East must be able to enjoy the dividends of peace immediately. Manifest commitment by both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to further the peace process will be necessary for the provision of international assistance to the reconstruction and development of the conflict-affected areas of the North and East.

Linkage between donor support and progress in the peace process

18. Assistance by the donor community must be closely linked to substantial and parallel progress in the peace process towards fulfilment of the objectives agreed upon by the parties in Oslo. The Conference encourages the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to enter into discussions as early as possible on a provisional administrative structure to manage the reconstruction and development aspects of the transition process. The process would need the expeditious development of a roadmap with clear milestones indicating the path towards a mutually acceptable final political solution. With this in view, the international community intends to review and monitor the progress of the peace process closely, with particular reference to objectives and milestones including:

(a) Full compliance with the cease-fire agreement by both parties.

(b) Effective delivery mechanisms relating to development activity in the North and East.

(c) Participation of a Muslim delegation as agreed in the declaration of the fourth session of peace talks in Thailand.

(d) Parallel progress towards a final political settlement based on the principles of the Oslo Declaration.

(e) Solutions for those displaced

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due to the armed conflict.

(f) Effective promotion and protection of the human rights of all people.

(g) Effective inclusion of gender equity and equality in the peace building, the conflict transformation and the reconstruction process, emphasizing an equitable representation of women in political fora and at other decision-making levels.

(h) Implementation of effective measures in accordance with the UNICEF-supported Action Plan to stop underage recruitment and to facilitate the release of underage recruits and their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

(i) Rehabilitation of former combatants and civilians in the North and East, who have been disabled physically or psychologically due to the armed conflict.

(j) Agreement by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE on a phased, balanced and verifiable de-escalation, de-militarization and normalization process at an appropriate time in the context of arriving at a political settlement.

Inputs from Civil Society Organizations and Private Enterprise

19. The Conference welcomes the inputs from the civil society meetings held in Colombo on 26-27 April 2003 and in Tokyo on 8 June 2003. The Conference is of the view that the intensity and continuity of involvement on the part of civil society organizations are essential to achieve success in the challenging task undertaken by the parties. The Conference is encouraged by the dynamic role played by private enterprise. The Conference also recognizes the contribution of academic communities, trade unions, professional groups, religious organizations and others.

Monitoring and Review

20. In view of the linkage between donor support and progress in the peace process, the international community will monitor and review the progress in the peace process. In implementing its own assistance programmes, the donor community intends to take into careful consideration the results of these periodic reviews. With full regard to the position of Norway as the facilitator, Japan, in co-operation with the United States and the European Union, will undertake necessary consultations to establish the modalities for this purpose as early as possible.

Follow-up Action

21. The Conference requests the Government of Japan, as the host country, to convey the outcome of the Conference to the LTTE.

Participants

List of participating Countries and Interntional Organizations of Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka 09 and 10 June 2003, Tokyo

Commonwealth of Australia, Republic of Austria, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Belgium, Federative Republic of Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, People's Republic of China, Kingdom of Denmark, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Finland, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Hellenic Greece, State of the City of Vatican, Republic of Iceland, India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, State of Israel, Republic of Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, State of Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Malaysia, Kingdom of Nepal, Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Kingdom of Norway, Sultanate of Oman, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, Portuguese Republic, Russian Federation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Singapore, Republic of South Africa, Spain, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Sweden, Swiss Confederation, Kingdom of Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

European Commission, Asian Development Bank, Asian Productivity Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Organization for Migration, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, United Nations Secretariat, United Nations Human Settlement Programme, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations World Food Programme, World Health Organization, World Bank. ❐

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Towards a better future

By Richard Armitage
US Deputy Secretary of State

"The peace process has reached a point where the momentum is slowing. This is precisely the point where a push from the international community, an infusion of moral and material support, can move the parties and the process forward. We all know there won't be another opportunity quite like this one. Indeed, this is a historic event that can take Sri Lanka to the horizon line of a better future, but only if that is where the people of Sri Lanka want to go, because no matter how much we pledge at this conference, it is ultimately the prime minister, the president of Sri Lanka, members of the LTTE and most importantly of all the people of Sri Lanka, who will have to deliver on the promise of peace," United States Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said in his opening remarks at Sri Lanka Donors' Conference Akasaka Prince Hotel, Tokyo, Japan on 9 June.

Following is the transcript of Mr Armitage's opening remarks:

Thank you. Prime Minister Wickremasinghe, Foreign Minster Kawaguchi, Ambassadors, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. May I first begin by thanking the government of Japan, and more specifically Special Envoy Akashi, for hosting this conference and for acting together with our Norwegian and European Union colleagues as co-chairs.

As Prime Minster Koizumi alluded to a few moments ago, we are all aware that the monsoons started early this year in Sri Lanka, and the country saw its worst flooding in 50 years. Hundreds of people lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands lost their homes and everything they had. The government of Sri Lanka was quick to respond to the human tragedy. The LTTE also collected assistance for those affected by the floods. Many nations and many international organizations came to the aid of the Sri Lankan people with life-saving donations of food and of money. Today the flood waters are subsiding, but a certain conviction has lingered behind: The LTTE, the government of Sri Lanka, all the people of that nation and the international community - we cannot afford to come together like this only when disaster strikes. We must also respond to opportunity. It is far cheaper in terms of money, and in terms of human life, to invest in peace and to invest in prosperity, than to wait for disease, war and disaster to extract their terrible tolls.

This is what Prime Minister Koizumi's commendable and innovative new foreign assistance program - the Consolidation of Peace Initiative - is all about. And this is the philosophy underlying the international activities of Norway, which has backed up its commitment to world peace and development with hard work and with cold cash in some two dozen countries. The United States also is following the cutting-edge trend with programs such as the Millennium Challenge Account and the HIV/AIDS initiative, which President Bush just signed into law.

So I congratulate you for joining with us today and for coming together to make an important investment in the future. Sri Lanka is a small country. It may seem remote to many of our day-to-day concerns, but success in this instance will bring national, regional and international benefits, and will forestall the various costs that we can all bear from such a conflict. It will also demonstrate that the world community is capable of acting peacefully to preempt human suffering. So I am delighted to be here today to represent my country and our commitment.

Just a few years ago, the United States was considering discontinuing our development assistance program to Sri Lanka, given the on-going conflict. But today we're supporting dozens of projects in all areas of the country, including the north and including the east, everything from clearing landmines to constructing new schools. And in the course of this conference, the United States will pledge an additional $54 million to this effort, not just for the reasons I have mentioned, but also because my country believes - certainly I believe - in the prospects for peace in Sri Lanka, and in the vision of my friend, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

To date, this peace process has seen much progress. Indeed, so much that only the truly thorny issues are left. Consider, for example, that 300,000 refugees have already expressed their confidence in the process by returning home to war-torn areas, exceeding expectations, and in the process nearly overwhelming relief efforts. But there are 800,000 more waiting in the wings. I think that is a good indicator of the special challenges of success in this instance.

So it is hardly surprising that the rate of progress in peace negotiations has slowed. I know that this is a difficult time for Sri Lanka. Certainly the LTTE has expressed their frustration that so little international assistance has arrived in the northern and the eastern areas of the country. And I can understand that frustration. The delivery of aid to these areas has to improve if people are to have faith in the process. I believe the government understands that and can and will do better. But it will be difficult for them to do that alone, and indeed that is exactly the kind of issue that should be discussed and can only be resolved around a negotiating table. I believe it is time for the parties to delineate and agree to a shared vision, not only of where they want to end up, with a federal structure based on internal self-determination, but also of interim steps that will carry them in that direction and will lead the country to that destination. So I'm making today a personal appeal to the LTTE: prove to your people, to all the people of Sri Lanka, and to those donor nations that want to help you, that you are committed to a negotiated settlement. Prove it by coming back to the table.

Now I am aware that there is a certain irony in my urging the LTTE back to the table, given that I did not allow them a seat at my table back at the pre-conference in April. But the fix for that

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situation is solely in the hands of the LTTE, the organization best known for pioneering the practice of turning its sons and daughters into human bombs. It's going to have to work hard to build trust and to convince the world that it is capable of playing a legitimate role in the political life of Sri Lanka.

And while we've seen some promising signs over the past 18 months, we've also seen some troubling signs that old habits continue. The United States would be prepared to spell out the steps we believe the LTTE needs to take to achieve legitimacy, at least in our eyes; but we simply cannot even consider doing so if they refuse to participate in the peace process.

The government of Sri Lanka also will have to take some difficult steps to make progress at this point. Most of these steps, including the economic reforms that are so crucial to reviving all regions of the country, are going to be contentious. There is a risk with any multi-party democracy that such differences of opinion may be exaggerated or misinterpreted by outsiders, and so the challenge for the president and indeed for the prime minister is to demonstrate to the LTTE, and to the international donors for that matter, that even though there may be disagreements between the parties in power, there is unity of resolve and common purpose. To that end, President Kumaratunga's role is especially important. Indeed, a peaceful settlement to the conflict may well depend on the president's blessing. We all know she is committed to peace, and as I have said in the past, she has a spiritually significant role to play in the truth and reconciliation that must take place, and I hope that she will choose to play that role.

As noted, the peace process has reached a point where the momentum is slowing. This is precisely the point where a push from the international community, an infusion of moral and material support, can move the parties and the process forward. We all know there won't be another opportunity quite like this one. Indeed, this is a historic event that can take Sri Lanka to the horizon line of a better future, but only if that is where the people of Sri Lanka want to go, because no matter how much we pledge at this conference, it is ultimately the prime minister, the president of Sri Lanka, members of the LTTE and most importantly of all the people of Sri Lanka, who will have to deliver on the promise of peace.

Special Envoy Akashi, I thank you again, and the government of Japan, for hosting this conference, and for giving us all the opportunity to show our collective will to face the problems and the promise of our times together. Thank you. ❐

A magnificent collective pledge of support

PM's Speech in Tokyo

The following is the text of the concluding speech by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on 10 June at the Conference of donor countries:

The act you have just performed of adopting the Declaration on the Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka is a historic one for all of us. It marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

For the people and the Government of Sri Lanka, hope for a future of peace, progress and development. For all of you partners with us on our journey, the prospect of fulfillment in the achievement of a cherished goal - that of peace in a country to which you have given so much of your time, your concern and your effort.

I know I am echoing the sentiments of all our people when I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the outstanding display of cooperation and friendship throughout these last two days in Tokyo.

All of the presentations made by the delegates in this Conference had one central thought. That of Peace in Sri Lanka and the belief that although the challenges were profound, the promise of success was clearly evident.

I want to tell you all - the sponsor of this unique meeting- Japan, the Co-chairs of the Conference, all of the 51 country participants and 21 international organizations that gathered here in Tokyo on the invitation of the Government of Japan that I personally, deeply and sincerely appreciate the untiring efforts all of you have made on behalf of my people and country.

The messages you gave us through these two days - your analyses and your observations, as we set out on this challenging journey, were loud and clear. The Declaration marks out the sign posts for the road we will be taking, together.

First, that we need to make every effort to restart the process and resume negotiations towards the goals set out at Oslo. Today's Tokyo Declaration sets-out a new framework which I strongly believe will re-energize Sri Lanka's peace and development.

Second, Sri Lanka has to overcome the delays, the blockages and the inertia of its bureaucratic apparatus and transform it into one capable of speedy implementation where work is done efficiently and effectively. This requires significant political resolve and I intend to provide the leadership necessary to achieve this result.

Third, that there is an intrinsic link between peace and development, and

Four, that there is global support for the Sri Lanka peace process.

As I said yesterday in my opening remarks, I regret the fact that the LTTE are not with us here in Tokyo. Had they been here they too could have heard and been encouraged by these messages and shared in the success of this event.

Our efforts at getting the LTTE back to the table will continue. The six rounds of talks, in the making of which many of you have rendered yeoman service, have yielded remarkable achievement. The ceasefire has been consolidated. The LTTE have reiterated their serious and sincere commitment to the peace process. And, the process itself continues with contact being maintained at various levels.

The central message of this conference will be most helpful in the resump-

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tion of negotiations.

Your confidence that this will soon happen is manifest in your positive response to the Needs Assessment report and our strategic vision of Regaining Sri Lanka.

The figures of your pledges speak for themselves. Assistance for the reconstruction and development of the entirety of Sri Lanka to a cumulative estimated amount in excess of US $ 4.5 billion over four years. These resources will be dedicated to the regaining Sri Lanka programme, the reconstruction of the North and East and the five adjacent Districts.

I must confess that even the most optimistic among us would not have expected this massive, overwhelming indication of support. It will lay the foundation for the realization of our goal of a peaceful Sri Lanka in which all its people could live in harmony, safety and dignity. With your encouragement and active involvement, we can make it happen.

I referred yesterday to the uniqueness of the international community's support for Sri Lanka even while a permanent peace was not yet a reality.

Since the ceasefire, 15 months ago, the international community has demonstrated an uncommon faith in our ability to move forward and supported us with the resources to do so. Oslo was one such instance.

Today at Tokyo we see not only a magnificent collective pledge of support and encouragement but also the prospect of even more support if we can successfully achieve our goal.

With your help, and the peaceful resolution of our conflict we can become a successful model for others similarly placed to follow.

Many of you have indicated that your assistance will keep pace with satisfactory progress on the peace process. I, for one, welcome that. I see no problem in your having such an expectation. In fact I would go further and say that we wish to be as transparent as possible in regard to the aid we will receive and spend.

And, I invite you in all sincerity to let us know what more you would wish us to do to be accountable. Our civil society, too, as was expressed to you yesterday will need to be brought in fully to participate with us as we move forward.

In conclusion, I wish once again to thank all those who made this unique and historic event for Sri Lanka possible.

The personal inspiration and support of His Excellency Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan and Her Excellency Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan have been outstanding. Ambassador Akashi has been a towering pillar of strength to me personally and has helped us all at every turn. I hope that the Tokyo Declaration and the follow-up action contained therein, even in a modest way, could develop into a symbol for the success of Prime Minister Koizumi's Consolidation of peace Initiative.

The work, support and encouragement of the indefatigable facilitator-Norway, the Co-chairs, and all of the delegates here present have been magnificent in their support.

I wish to thank the Secretariat too for their work in ensuring the success of this meeting

Tomorrow, our real work starts.

On behalf of the people and Government of Sri Lanka, to all of you, I offer my warmest thanks for your good wishes, encouragement and continued support. ❐

Tigers not bound by Tokyo Declaration, says LTTE

June 11 - The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has criticised the government of Ranil Wickremesinghe "for complicating the peace process by allowing undue and unwarranted interference by extra territorial forces in the ethnic conflict, which is an internal political affair that has to be resolved by the parties in conflict."

Reacting to the Tokyo Declaration of Donor countries and international institutions, the LTTE said that the resolutions and declarations adopted by the donor community at the Tokyo conference were not acceptable and had no binding obligations on the organisation. "The Colombo government, with the active assistance of the facilitator and its international 'tactical allies' has formulated this strategic paper to superimpose its own agenda on the LTTE. This is unacceptable to us," the LTTE statement said.

The LTTE in an official statement issued from its headquarters in Kilinochchi, northern Sri Lanka reiterated its position that it would participate in the negotiating process only when the Sri Lankan government puts forward a clearly defined draft framework for an interim administrative structure for the Northeast.

The LTTE has also rejected the offer made by the Prime Minister, Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe of a 'provisional administrative structure' within the laws of the land as a restatement of his previous position with a new terminology.

"We are disappointed to note that the Prime Minister's statement does not offer anything new. The so-called 'provisional administrative structure' is the new name given to the Apex Council proposed by him for development and rejected by us as extremely limited and inadequate," the LTTE statement said.

"The Prime Minister has not responded to our call for a draft framework for an innovative and effective politico-administrative structure. Contrary to Mr Wickremesinghe's statement to the international donor community, we seriously differ in perception in connection with what the LTTE leadership proposes and what his government offers. While our leadership has proposed an Interim Administrative framework, a politico-administrative structure for the Northeast with wider

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participation of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has offered a council with a structure and mechanism for the development of the region. The Prime Minister is taking cover behind the laws and constitution of Sri Lanka, which have effectively institutionalised racism against which the Tamil people have been struggling for decades," the statement observed.

"Furthermore, the LTTE and Mr Wickremesinghe's government also hold starkly divergent views as to the nature of the final political solution to end Sri Lanka's protracted ethnic conflict. While the Prime Minister envisages piecemeal reforms to the present constitution, the LTTE has proposed a radical transformation of the system of governance in Sri Lanka, through the institutionalisation of a new, secular and equitable constitution which recognises the Tamils' right to self-determination and homeland. It is whilst recognising that this is an impossible task for Mr Wickremesinghe's fragile ruling coalition that our organisation proposed the establishment of an Interim Administration," the LTTE statement said.

The LTTE has also criticised the government of Ranil Wickremesinghe for complicating the peace process by allowing undue and unwarranted interference by extra territorial forces in the ethnic conflict, which is an internal political affair that has to be resolved by the parties in conflict.

"The compulsions that arose from severe economic and political bankruptcy have compelled the government to seek the ultimate refuge in the so-called 'international safety net' to resolve the economic and political crisis of the country. By seeking this 'safety net' the Colombo regime has shifted the peace process from third party facilitation to the realm of international arbitration by formidable external forces that has far-reaching consequences to the political and economic destiny of the island," the LTTE's statement declared.

Commenting on the resolutions and declarations adopted by the donor community at the Tokyo conference, the LTTE's statement said that the document has no binding obligations on the organisation. "The LTTE was not involved in the deliberations or in the formulation of these declarations. We have not been consulted on the set of propositions and resolutions enunciated in the Tokyo Declaration. The Colombo government, with the active assistance of the facilitator and its international 'tactical allies' has formulated this strategic paper to super-impose its own agenda on the LTTE. This is unacceptable to us," the LTTE statement said.❐

Navy Sinks LTTE Ship

June 16 - A ship belonging to the Tamil Tigers, named Shioshin was sunk off the coast of Mullaitvu on 14 June, Saturday, following a mid-sea confrontation with the Sri Lankan Navy. At least twelve LTTE cadres reportedly on the vessel were missing after the ship exploded following an exchange of fire.

The Sri Lankan Navy said the LTTE exploded the ship on being asked to stop for inspection while the LTTE claimed the Navy fired and sunk the vessel. There were no officials of the SLMM on board the Navy vessel when the drama unfolded at 4 a.m. Saturday morning.

However both the government and the LTTE were quick to point out that the latest incident will not lead to a resumption of war on the ground but that effective mechanisms would have to be put in place to ensure confrontations in the seas are averted.

According the SLN version of what happened, the vessel with no flag was spotted by a Sri Lanka Navy gunboat 175 nautical miles to the East off Mullaitivu at around 3.30 a.m. The SLN had first spied the ship on radar screens and noted that the ship was towing another boat laden with cargo and heading towards Point Pedro.

Challenging the vessel the SLN gunboat demanded to know the ships registration number and other official details. Having been given some details from the suspect ship, the gunboat informed the Naval base in Trincomalee which in turn sought clarification from SLN headquarters in Colombo. Checking with Lloyds shipping register the SLN had found the details to be bogus.

The gunboat thereafter received instructions to apprehend and check the vessel and its cargo. Once more challenging the ship, the naval patrol boat demanded it to stop. Refusing to obey, the navy patrol boat had then witnessed the boat that was being towed full of cargo being released from the ship. Despite giving chase to this boat, the SLN gunboat could not apprehend it as it disappeared beyond Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

The ship in the meantime had continued to sail towards Point Pedro. Giving chase, the SLN gunboat fired some warning shots in the direction of the ship attempting to force it to stop. According to a senior naval officer, the LTTE ship had returned fired. The Navy said that suddenly the Tiger ship exploded in a ball of fire and slowly began to sink. The time was around 5 a.m.

Initial reports from the SLN gunboat stated they had seen some of the human cargo on board the ship jumping overboard seconds before the explosion.

Soon after the incident there was some confusion as it was believed the Navy had taken 12 LTTE cadres from the ship into custody. Spokesman for the Navy, Captain Jayantha Perera however stated that this was not so. "We do not have any LTTE cadre in our custody from this vessel," he said, explaining that the ship's crew had exploded themselves and the ship 'Shioshin,' before they could be apprehended.

Naval officers alleged that they suspect the cargo on this ship, contained weapons and explosives but yet do not have any evidence to prove the ship was engaged in smuggling of weapons.

Describing the SLN's action as "a gross violation of the Ceasefire Agreement" LTTE political wing leader S.P. Thamilchelvan stated that the 12 Sea Tigers on board the LTTE vessel were being held in government custody adding, "If any harm were to befall the crew of the LTTE vessel, then the sole responsibility for the events lay with the

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Sri Lanka Navy and this incident would have very grave consequences."

However military spokesman Brigadier Sanath Karunaratne told journalists that the government denied LTTE allegations that the 12 Sea Tigers were in government custody. He said the LTTE vessel suspected to be carrying arms, ammunition and war-like equipment had defied naval orders to surrender and sank after an explosion on board around 8.40am on Saturday. He said that the incident took place "at a location of about 175 nautical miles off Mullaitivu and within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sri Lanka."

Following discussions with SLMM chief Tryggve Tellefssen, Defence Secretary Austin Fernando has ordered the Navy and the Air Force to launch an operation in the Mullaitivu seas to look for any survivors. The Navy and Air Force have also agreed to allow the Scandinavian monitors to carry out search operations in the Mullaitivu coast and inspect navy vessels or interview naval personnel engaged in Saturday's incident.

The LTTE claimed that the LTTE's ship which was carrying oil, and not weapons as alleged by the Navy, was sunk by the Navy in international waters and that 12 LTTE cadres on board were arrested by the Navy.

In a letter to the SLMM, Mr. Thamilselvan said, "This vessel was sailing 265 nautical miles off the East coast on June 14, when the Sri Lanka Navy intercepted and wanted to examine the vessel. The captain of our vessel agreed at about 0700 hours to comply with the request and at the same time brought it to the notice of the Peace Secretariat which was in turn conveyed to the SLMM. Half an hour later five Navy vessels approached our vessel and, positioning 1000 metres away and started firing. After a few minutes of firing our crew members were requested to use life-saving boats and embark the Navy vessel. This was complied with by the crew.

"We requested the SLMM to rush to the spot, investigate the matter and ensure the safety of our cadres. The SLN had taken the SLMM members to a spot 110 meters from the shore and pointed out the alleged location where our vessel was sunk. Apparently there was no trace that could be observed by the SLMM members. The SLN has attempted to make the SLMM monitors believe its concocted story that our vessel was intercepted and sunk at a distance of 110 M, well within its territorial waters and not in the international waters. The SLN should have first communicated with the SLMM before deciding on their attack.

"We provided the SLMM monitors with the right bearing of the location. We reliably understand that the SLN, consequent to our supplying the bearings, took the SLMM monitors on a journey to the location.

Half way through they reported that they cannot proceed that far due to rough seas and returned back, to buy time for the oil spill to disappear.

"We are afraid that SLN is working hard on a sabotage course of the entire peace process and wish to advise you that the SLN will have to bear responsibility for any dire consequences that may arise as a result of their action." ❐

The post-Tokyo context in the peace process

Jehan Perera

The absence of the LTTE could not stop the Tokyo donor conference from taking place with all the due ceremony and importance attached to the event. The Japanese prime minister and prominent international actors like US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage attended the Tokyo donor conference. By not being present at Tokyo the LTTE lost an opportunity to put its case, and that of the Tamil people, before the international community.

As pointed out by the Daily Mirror in an editorial, a cavalcade of foreign envoys went to the Wanni to appeal to the LTTE to join the Tokyo conference, but to no avail.

One of the LTTE's grounds for refusing to go to Tokyo, which was echoed by Tamils who sympathised with its position, was that it did not wish to jointly raise funds for Sri Lanka when there were no appropriate mechanisms for that money to be shared with it. Or to put it differently, there was the apprehension that the money raised for Sri Lanka would not go in fair and adequate amounts to the north and east. As one religious leader from Jaffna put it in extreme form, for fifty years the Tamils of the north east got nothing from the government, and did not anticipate getting much from Tokyo either.

But now as a result of staying put in the Wanni, the LTTE has lost its opportunity to claim the credit for jointly raising the funds that were offered at the Tokyo donor conference. The ability of the LTTE to ensure that the funds raised in Tokyo would be spent in the north-east would also be lessened unless the Sri Lankan government and international community act with foresight to avoid this situation.

A major weakness in the LTTE's analysis of political affairs is its evident belief that if one side is to gain, the other must necessarily lose. This is the win-lose type of thinking that probably stems from the military mindset in which there are no compromises, only total victories or defeats. But in political and human relationships there are many ways in which both sides can gain in a win-win outcome.

The Tokyo conference would have permitted the LTTE to engage with the leaders of the world, to remind them of the special problems of the north-east and directly ensure that a substantial and just proportion of the moneys raised would be spent in the north east. The words of the LTTE would not have been limited to Tamilnet and to the Sri Lankan media, but would have been taken up by the international media. This would have acted as a check on the Sri Lankan government, or any future government, from behaving as governments have in the past.

But of even greater importance would have been the opportunities to engage on a one-on-one basis during

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the lunch breaks and outside of the conference time with the leaders of the world, and even of countries that have currently banned them. Unfortunately it was not engagement and dialogue that the LTTE chose on this occasion, but withdrawal. They failed to take up the historic opportunity to have the voice of the Tamil people heard by the international community. Now it is necessary to work doubly hard so that another opportunity will present itself.

Next step

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's stated willingness to respond positively to the LTTE's demand for a politico-administrative interim arrangement for the north east is a positive sign in regard to restarting the peace process. By coming up with a design for an Interim Authority in place of the interim administration that they asked for just prior to the Tokyo conference, the government failed to satisfy the LTTE's desire for a portion of legitimacy that comes with legally governing a territory. The design of the interim authority that the government offered, which would be for the limited purpose of relief and reconstruction activities, had a laudable purpose.

In its response to the LTTE, the government sought to use the legal mechanisms that once created the Mahaweli Authority and the Southern Development Authority to satisfy the LTTE with a powerful structure that could cut through layers of bureaucracy. But in doing so, the government neglected to satisfy the political aspirations and self-image of the LTTE.

It must be remembered at this juncture that the ethnic conflict did not arise simply due to economic or bureaucratic infirmities, but due to the deliberate political marginalisation of the Tamil people. The interim authority proposed by the government in its last ditch effort to convince the LTTE to attend the Tokyo conference failed to give adequate consideration to the LTTE's political needs. But it is also important that when the interim arrangement is fashioned that it should include strong human rights protections and an international monitoring mechanism.

Several civil society statements issued just prior to the Tokyo conference laid out a framework of human rights and pluralism that must surely guide the efforts of the government, LTTE and international facilitators. They are important because over the past 18 months of ceasefire the LTTE has sought to intimidate the political opposition in the north and east in an unacceptable manner, in which political assassinations are a terrifying instrument of eliminating the opposition.

One civil society statement said that "Because interim arrangements have the power to help shape long-term political and social developments, we believe that human rights guarantees must be built into any new administrative structures for the north and east from the very beginning. Clear and enforceable human rights benchmarks must be made central to the process of monitoring the disbursement of reconstruction funds."

The statement also made the point that "The active participation of citizens in government is not only a cornerstone of democratic practice, it is also the most effective way of ensuring adher-

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ence to principles of accountability and transparency in governance. Equally important is the respect for pluralism and diversity in all aspects of economic, social and political life."

Disbursement of funds

The pledging of USD 4.5 billion over the next four years to Sri Lanka at the Tokyo donor conference on June 9-10 came as an unexpected surprise. The absence of the LTTE from what had been promoted as a joint government-LTTE appeal to the international community had led to reasonable apprehensions that donor interest in the event would diminish. But the total pledged was 50 percent larger than the USD 3 billion that was anticipated as the target figure.

More striking, it was the equivalent of the funds pledged for the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan. The international support to Sri Lanka was also manifested by the presence in Tokyo of representatives of 51 countries and 22 international organisations, with the Prime Minister of Japan Junichiro Koizumi and US Under Secretary of State Richard Armitage in attendance.

Apart from the massive pledge of economic assistance, there was another significant development at the Tokyo conference. This was the acceptance of a federal system, supplemented by appropriate democratic and human rights safeguards, as the appropriate framework of governance for Sri Lanka. A consensus on federalism was evident in what Sri Lankan and world leaders had to say.

Both the opening and closing speeches of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, as well as the speech by the US Under Secretary of State Richard Armitage referred to a federal system containing the principle of internal self-determination. The final conference statement stated that it "commends both parties for their commitment to a lasting and negotiated peace based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka."

Therefore, five decades after it was first put forward as the main political demand of the Tamil political parties, a federal system has become internationally accepted as the appropriate framework of governance for Sri Lanka. This was a major achievement for which the two very important parties not present at the Tokyo conference should have been there to take the credit. Both the opposition People's Alliance and the LTTE itself could have taken a measure of satisfaction in the entrenchment of the federal consensus to which they had contributed so greatly, albeit in very different ways.

From the time it was first raised as a political demand by the Tamil parliamentary parties, federalism was fiercely opposed by the Sinhalese polity as being a precursor to the final division of the country. But in its draft constitution of August 2000, the former PA government headed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga braved its critics to present before Parliament a quasi-federal constitutional arrangement.

And it was the LTTE's single-minded military campaign for a separate Tamil state that forced both the former and present governments to accept the reality of a Tamil dominant north and east that could not be ruled by unilateral fiat from Colombo.

Bringing these parties into the peace process alongside the government and international community would constitute the two prongs of the post-Tokyo agenda for peace.

Main challenge

Ironically, after the Tokyo donor conference the main challenge for the government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will not be so much to spend the foreign assistance expeditiously, but to woo the LTTE back into the peace process. Most donors who pledged aid, and notably Japan which pledged a massive USD 1 billion, said that the disbursement of their funds would be conditional on the satisfactory progress of the peace process.

And if a final political settlement were to be the objective, the government would also need to find a way to woo the PA to give its parliamentary support to legalising the final peace agreement, and even interim settlements of which there are likely to be many. Regrettably the success of the government's fund raising efforts at the Tokyo donor conference was not matched by equivalent gains with regard to these two parties.

The PA could not rise above its pettiness to congratulate the government on raising USD 4.5 billion but instead bemoaned the increased indebtedness of the country. As for the LTTE it ignored the matter of the funds raised and instead focused on what the government had failed to do. But with its mantle of sole representative of the Tamil people, the LTTE needs to show more interest in ensuring that this vast sum of money is made available to transform the lives of the poverty-stricken Tamil people and others in the north east.

In order to safeguard the peace process, which underpins the aid that was pledged, the government and LTTE need to speedily recommence peace talks that now stand suspended for almost two months. Unfortunately, the prospects for an immediate breakthrough on this score appear to be dim. In its first public response to the Tokyo conference, the LTTE appeared to be unfazed by the magnitude of the international community's generosity to Sri Lanka.

Instead, it reiterated its justification for not attending the Tokyo conference. It said, "While our leadership has proposed an interim administrative framework, a politico-administrative structure for the Northeast with wider participation of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has offered a council with a structure and mechanism for the development of the region."

The LTTE also rejected the final declaration of the conference, noting that it was not a party to the deliberations in Tokyo. It said, "The Colombo government, with the active assistance of the facilitator and its international 'tactical' allies has formulated this strategic paper to superimpose its own agenda on the LTTE. This is unacceptable to us."

The LTTE's suspicion that it is being cornered by the Sri Lankan government in concert with the international community is reflected in its assertion that there is a bid to pressurise it into agreeing to unacceptable terms and conditions.

Bridging gap

One challenge today is to find a way to bridge the gap between what the government is prepared to give and what the LTTE wants. The LTTE's strategy since it suspended peace talks is to keep

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on asking the government to give more, but without engaging the government in direct negotiations. The LTTE needs to reconsider this strategy of communicating its dissatisfaction via the written word and expecting the government to come up with the proper answer. If the government fails to come up with satisfactory solutions, then it is the duty of the LTTE to supply its own concrete proposals. And the answer can only come through give and take, interaction and engagement at the negotiating table.

After the Tokyo donor conference the main challenge for the government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is to get the LTTE back into the peace process. Most donors who pledged aid said that the disbursement of their funds would be conditional on the satisfactory progress of the peace process. And if a final political settlement were to be the objective, the government would also need to find a way to persuade the opposition PA to give its parliamentary support to legalising the final peace agreement, and also the interim settlements of which there are likely to be many.

Regrettably the success of the government's fund raising efforts at the Tokyo donor conference was not matched by equivalent gains with regard to these two parties. In the post-Tokyo coference period both the government and LTTE should be addressing the question of resuming peace talks as soon as possible.

The USD 4.5 billion that was pledged to Sri Lanka is meant to improve the life of its people, especially those in the war-devastated regions of the North East. It is reasonable to believe that the donors will not wait patiently until it is convenient for the government and the LTTE to get together.

Therefore the absence of a forward movement in the peace process for the past two months after the suspension of peace talks by the LTTE is a cause for serious concern. This is coupled with incidents of significant violence such as the sinking of an LTTE ship off the northern coast by the navy and the rising toll of political assassinations of members of Tamil parties.

The need for a speedy resumption of peace talks to deal with these problems becomes manifest. A positive development in this context is the reported preparedness of the government to offer the LTTE an interim administration based on the model developed by the former PA government. The Constitutional bill that was presented in Parliament in August 2000 by the former government included provisions for an interim administration that would be headed by a Chief Minister, with other ministerial positions and police powers, in addition to other structures of governance.

In its first public response to the Tokyo conference, the LTTE reiterated its justification for not attending the conference. It said, "While our leadership has proposed an interim administrative framework, a politico-administrative structure for the Northeast with wider participation of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has offered a council with a structure and mechanism for the development of the region."

It is possible that the formal structures of the interim administration for the North East prepared by the former

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government would meet the basic requirements specified by the LTTE.

It has the virtue of being a politico-administrative structure and of being sufficiently concrete and specific as demanded by the LTTE. The LTTE also would be interested in ensuring that the vast sum of money made available at the Tokyo conference is used to transform the lives of the poverty-stricken Tamil people and others in the North East.

Two obstacles

There are, however, two major obstacles that lie in the path of taking this latest government proposal forward. The first obstacle is the unacceptable conduct of the LTTE in relation to the political opposition in the North East. When it asks for a politico-administrative structure for the North East, the LTTE is essentially asking for a provisional government for the north-east. But when it asks for such powers, the LTTE needs to simultaneously moderate its behaviour. As a guerrilla organisation or liberation movement fighting a war, the LTTE may have felt it advantageous to them to use assassination as a way of eliminating its political opponents or neutralising them.

The justification might have been made that this was a time of war. However, in a time of ceasefire and as a party claiming the right to wield governmental powers in the North East, the LTTE has no moral or political justification for hunting down and assassinating its political opponents.

The most recent assassination of the Jaffna leader of the EPRLF is unacceptable and has to be condemned. While the LTTE generally denies playing a role in such assassinations, the victims themselves invariably blame the LTTE. This was between the thirtieth (according to BBC) and the fiftieth such assassinations according to complaints made by the targeted political parties.

Killing its political opponents at will during the period of the ceasefire is an example of an LTTE practice that is untenable in the light of its demand for an interim administration for the north-east. By accepting non-LTTE Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese representation on the interim body, the LTTE would be demonstrating its commitment to pluralist politics in the future as well.

After the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the LTTE has access to the whole of the country. Therefore its opponents have nowhere to hide. The terror they must be feeling is too horrible to contemplate. Due to this campaign of assassinations, it is important that prior to the transfer of powers of government in the North East to the LTTE, it publicly assures the people that it will not resort to violence in governance. Further, it is also important that the government and LTTE sign a human rights agreement which involves international monitoring as demanded by civil organisations. For its part the LTTE must realise that the imposition of such conditions should not be thought of as singling out the LTTE for special attention.

Further, the LTTE needs to realise that if the government is to grant it powers of governance over the northeast, it should behave in a manner that enables the government to entrust such enormous powers and responsibilities to it. Providing the people with peace and human rights is not only the government's responsibility. It is also the LTTE's shared responsibility. Unfortunately, from the time of the signing of the ceasefire to the present time, there is much to be desired in the conduct of the LTTE in relation to the human rights of the people.

Several civil society statements issued just prior to the Tokyo conference laid out a framework of human rights and pluralism that must surely guide the efforts of the government, LTTE and international facilitators. One civil society statement said that "Because interim arrangements have the power to help shape long-term political and social developments, we believe that human rights guarantees must be built into any new administrative structures for the north and east from the very beginning. Clear and enforceable human rights benchmarks must be made central to the process of monitoring the disbursement of reconstruction funds."

These human rights safeguards are important because over the past 18 months of ceasefire the LTTE has sought to intimidate the political opposition in the north and east in an unacceptable manner, in which political assassinations are a terrifying instrument of eliminating the opposition. It has abducted children for its army and has been smuggling in arms into government-held areas. Such actions cannot continue if the peace process is to enter its next stage, which will see federalism take root in Sri Lanka in the interim period in the form of an interim administration that is controlled but not monopolised by the LTTE.

While the government needs to find a way to provide the LTTE with a politico-administrative structure for the governance of the north east, the LTTE needs to start demonstrating that it will use those powers as a trust for the sake of the people and not for its own dominance. What the LTTE appears to seek is nothing less than an interim government. But democratic governance of any society is about politics, and a willingness to accept pluralism and give and take.

It is not about digging in one's heels, resisting further changes and expecting the other to come up with all the answers.

The second obstacle that lies in the path of transferring governmental powers to the LTTE pertain to the constitutional requirements that the President should agree to the interim set up. The August 2000 Constitutional bill was drafted at a time when President Kumaratunga was the effective head of the government.

Therefore the Constitutional bill gave her a prominent role to play. Therefore, if the present government wishes to use the concept of an interim administration derived from the August 2000 concept, it will have to win the support of the President.

Narrow calculation

At present it is unlikely that the government can get President Kumaratunga to support its initiatives which have, so far, been developed by the government on its own without consultation with the opposition. It is reasonable that the President should wish to be part and parcel of any process that requires her cooperation. However, the manner in which the government succeeded in monopolising the success of the Tokyo conference, and keeping the President out of it, suggests that it has no real interest in getting the President and opposition on board the peace process.

If the government had wished to enlist the cooperation of the opposition the

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(Continued from page 15)

Tokyo donor conference would have been the ideal forum to bring in the President. There was nothing to negotiate freshly at the Tokyo conference, as the groundwork had all been done before. What was necessary was simply to be present and make gracious speeches. The fact that the government did not invite President Kumaratunga to take part in the Tokyo conference suggests that it has not yet truly given its mind to generating a bipartisan political approach to resolving the ethnic conflict.

Narrow political calculation may suggest that the government's real bottom line is to keep the ceasefire going for another three years until the next Presidential election. With President Kumaratunga's two terms of office ended, and her inability to contest again, there is little reason to doubt that Prime Minister Wickremesinghe would be the strongest candidate at the Presidential elections scheduled to be held in 2006. The calculation may be that with the powers of the Presidency, the government would have the capacity to force through legislation that would enable the LTTE to be satisfied with its share of power in the country.

But logical though this line of reasoning may seem to be, there is a major problem inherent in this reasoning. The fact is that two years is a long time and many unexpected things would occur in this time, not only in Sri Lanka but also in the world. There is no guarantee that the international community would continue to have a special interest in Sri Lanka, as it has at the present time. A war that for twenty years was known as a forgotten war from an international perspective, risks becoming that once again.

It is a general axiom in life that, whether in personal or public life, what is good should be done sooner rather than left for later. With the accumulated wisdom of the ages a poet wrote, "for of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: it might have been."

Unless constructive changes take place in relations between the government and the President and peace talks between the government and the LTTE also recommence at this time, Sri Lanka risks being unable to utilise most of the USD 4.5 billion pledged to it to uplift the lives of its people. ❐

Tokyo Donor Conference and the LTTE Response

"It is the little rift within the lute, that by and by will make the music mute, and ever widening slowly silence all"

- Alfred Tennyson

D. B. S. Jeyaraj

Twenty four hours was all that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) took to dispel the euphoria generated by the 'successful' Tokyo donor conference aimed at strengthening the peace process in Sri Lanka.

The LTTE issued a hard-hitting statement from its Kilinochchi based headquarters in the Wanni on June 11. While reiterating its hardline stance on the question of establishing an interim administrative structure for the Tamil majority North Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, the LTTE also made it crystal clear that it would not be bound by any provision in the unanimous declaration adopted at the tail end of the conference in Japan.

Furthermore, the Tigers went on to complain about international interference in Sri Lankan affairs and even implicitly censured the accredited facilitator, Norway.

Unable or unwilling to publicise its inner motivations in keeping away from Tokyo, the LTTE increased pressure on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to yield on the interim administration issue. The international community, however, felt that the LTTE's course of action was inappropriate and that the Tigers should have participated in Tokyo in the interest of the Tamil people.

With the LTTE defying such opinion, the international community too began flexing its muscles. It became a matter of prestige, particularly for the hosts. A strong signal that the world would not be cowed by Tiger threats had to be sent.

The congratulatory words of US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage to Japan for not capitulating to LTTE "blackmail" is indicative of this international mindset. The Tokyo summit, therefore, went ahead in spite of the LTTE boycott.

The two-day sessions resulted in an unprecedented bonanza for Sri Lanka. Earlier it was envisaged that Sri Lanka would get US$ 3 to 3.5 billion for a three-year period. The Tokyo conclave went far beyond these expectations. A staggering amount of US$ 4. 5 billion for four years from 2003 to 2006 was pledged.

It appeared that the donor community wanted to impress upon the LTTE that its absence would not hinder support for the peace process in anyway. Contrary to predictions in the Tiger camp that envisaged aid will decrease because of LTTE non-attendance, the Tokyo summit resulted in a massive increase that left the Sri Lankans jubilantly stunned.

The generosity displayed by 51 countries and 22 international organisations at Tokyo was not unconditional. Even though the Tiger absence prevented a joint signed obligation by both the government and the LTTE, the donors did make certain stipulations governing the pledged aid that linked aid to progress in the peace process.

Door left open

Special attention was paid to the plight of the north-east and recognising the LTTE's importance in this regard; the door was left open for a Tiger re-entry. These formed part of the Tokyo Declaration. Noting that during the past sessions of the peace talks, significant progress was achieved, the Donors reminded "the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE of the importance for both parties to make their utmost efforts to further promote the peace process founded upon the principles reflected in the Oslo Declaration."

Recognising the urgent need to sup-

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port the people in the conflict-affected areas of the north and east, and to make allocations towards this purpose, the Donors stated that "With regard to the north and east, priority-setting and project-implementation will take place with the government working in partnership with the LTTE, and with adequate safeguards for the interests of all communities. The conference expects that the government will ensure that the assistance pledged by the donor community to the reconstruction and development of the north and east is utilised specifically for that purpose."

The conference also urged the parties "to move expeditiously to a lasting and equitable political settlement. Such a settlement should be based upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In this regard, the conference looks forward to the parties reaching early agreement on a human rights declaration, as discussed at the sixth session of peace negotiations at Hakone."

Stressing the need for the LTTE to return to peace talks, and the linkage between international assistance and substantial progress in the peace process, the Donors stated, "The conference welcomes the LTTE's commitment to the negotiated peace process and urges the LTTE to return to the peace talks as soon as possible. The people in the conflict affected areas of the north and east must be able to enjoy the dividends of peace immediately. Manifest commitment by both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to further the peace process will be necessary for the provision of international assistance to the reconstruction and development of the conflict affected areas of the north and east. Assistance by the donor community must be closely linked to substantial and parallel progress in the peace process towards fulfilment of the objectives agreed upon by the parties in Oslo. The conference encourages the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to enter into discussions as early as possible on a provisional administrative structure to manage the reconstruction and development aspects of the transition process."

Roadmap with clear milestones

The Donors emphasized that the peace process "would need the expeditious development of a roadmap with clear milestones indicating the path towards a mutually acceptable final political solution." Making it clear that the Donors would closely watch the progress made by the parties, they stated that "the international community intends to review and monitor the progress of the peace process closely, with particular reference to objectives and milestones including: (a) Full compliance with the ceasefire agreement by both parties; (b) Effective delivery mechanisms relating to development activity in the north and east; (c) Participation of a Muslim delegation as agreed in the declaration of the fourth session of peace talks in Thailand; (d) Parallel progress towards a final political settlement based on the principles of the Oslo Declaration; (e) Solutions for those displaced due to the armed conflict; (f) Effective promotion and protection of the human rights of all people; (g) Effective inclusion of gender equity and equality in the peace building, the conflict transformation and the reconstruction process, emphasising an equitable representation of women in political fora and at other decision-making levels; (h) Implementation of effective measures in accordance with the UNICEF-supported action plan to stop underage recruitment and to facilitate the release of underage recruits and their rehabilitation and reintegration into society; (i) Rehabilitation of former combatants and civilians in the north and east, who have been disabled physically or psychologically due to the armed conflict; (j) Agreement by the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE on a phased, balanced, and verifiable de-escalation, demilitarisation and normalisation process at an appropriate time in the context of arriving at a political settlement."

The Tokyo Declaration, therefore, laid down some basic expectations of the donor community as to how the peace process should continue. While the LTTE had escaped being a signatory to specific guarantees, the declaration certainly outlined some behavioural principles.

The explicit condition that money allocated to the north east should be spent only in those areas and that the government should work in partnership with the LTTE to that purpose was quite favourable to the Tigers. Thus, Colombo too could not ignore the LTTE's role in utilising aid. A needs assessment study had allocated US$ 1. 38 billion for north eastern utilisation Continuous aid depended on the pace of peace process, thereby making the LTTE indispensable in sustained procurement.

Administrative structure

Wickremesinghe himself announced at the Conference the government's decision to install what he termed a "provisional administrative structure" for the north east.. He invited the LTTE for direct talks to formulate the structure. This meant that the Tigers could re-enter the process again to formulate an acceptable administrative structure and determine the modalities of reconstruction and development in the region.

Despite this enticing carrot, the LTTE suspected hidden stick. After decades of being a law unto themselves, the Tigers were not prepared to accept international dictates in spheres like "human rights for all people; recruitment of underage children as combatants; phased, balanced and verifiable demilitarisation," etc.

The Tiger response was swift and uncompromising. Commenting on the resolutions and declarations adopted by the donor community at the Tokyo conference, the LTTE's statement said that the document has no binding obligations on the organisation.

"The LTTE was not involved in the deliberations or in the formulation of these declarations. We have not been consulted on the set of propositions and resolutions enunciated in the Tokyo Declaration. The Colombo government, with the active assistance of the facilitator and its international 'tactical allies' has formulated this strategic paper to super-impose its own agenda on the LTTE. This is unacceptable to us," the LTTE statement said.

Thus it was patently clear that the LTTE regarded the Tokyo outcome as an exercise in entrapment and an effort to impose conditions on it. It was not prepared to accept those conditions. To the LTTE, it was 'aid with strings attached'.

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The Tigers went on to deliver what was perhaps a severe indictment of international involvement. It charged "the government of Ranil Wickremesinghe for complicating the peace process by allowing undue and unwarranted interference by extra territorial forces in the ethnic conflict, which is an internal political affair that has to be resolved by the parties in conflict."

Tactical allies?

LTTE Chief Negotiator Anton Balasingham in a previous letter to Wickremesinghe had made veiled references to the international factor in Sri Lanka. Now this official LTTE statement was bluntly critical. It virtually accused the Colombo government of conspiring with its "international tactical allies" in imposing conditions on the LTTE.

The somewhat uncomplimentary reference to Norway for providing "active assistance" in this enterprise was intriguing. Oslo had become facilitator due to the consent of the then government under President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the LTTE.

President Kumaratunga has been critical of the Norwegian role in recent times and members of her party had even denigrated the Scandinavians as "salmon eating busybodies." Now the LTTE too was expressing its disapproval for different reasons.

This meant that '*locus standi*' for a Norwegian role in Sri Lanka was diminishing. With the LTTE having announced a temporary suspension of the peace talks, Oslo too had been circumscribed. Norway was present in Tokyo as a delegate nation and not as facilitator. Earlier it was expected to be a co-chair of the conference. Now its role was shrinking further.

Interestingly enough it was the LTTE that had insisted upon international mediation saying that Tamils could not trust a Sinhala government. Now the Tigers were saying that it "is an internal political affair that has to be resolved by the parties in conflict."

This assertion is somewhat reminiscent of the time India was involved directly in Sri Lankan peacemaking. The very same LTTE that said "we love mother India," did an about-turn later and described India as an outsider intefering in a dispute between brothers.

Safety net

"The compulsions that arose from severe economic and political bankruptcy have compelled the government to seek the ultimate refuge in the so-called 'international safety net' to resolve the economic and political crisis of the country. "By seeking this 'safety net' the Colombo regime has shifted the peace process from third party facilitation to the realm of international arbitration by formidable external forces that has far-reaching consequences to the political and economic destiny of the island," the LTTE's statement declared.

Wickremesinghe had been describing the international role as a "safety net" in a bid to reassure the Sinhala people of the viability of the peace process. This attempt to strengthen the process has seemingly had a counter-productive effect. The LTTE suspects Wickremesinghe as using that net to trap and tame the Tiger. The international safety net was an entrapment device in Tiger eyes.

International dimension

Apparently, in Tiger perception, the international dimension was becoming a problem. As long as LTTE's wishes were fulfilled unconditionally, international "interference" was 'good.' The moment it sought to introduce universal standards of human rights and democracy it has become 'bad.'

Nothing is wrong with external forces as long as the political and economic destiny of the country is shaped according to Tiger whims and fancies. Any sign of deviation and the tryst with destiny has to be censured and possibly ended.

The international donor community, pledging massive amounts of aid, was entitled to lay down some conditions. The Tigers, however, were seeking to reverse the proverbial saying about "he who pays the piper calls the tune."

The LTTE wants the money as well as call the tune. If this is not agreed upon, then international involvement is to be criticised and discarded. With both President Kumaratunga and the LTTE becoming critical of Norway's facilitatory efforts, the continuing role of Norway as facilitator has become somewhat tenuous.

In a stinging blow to Wickremesinghe's hopes of an early rapprochement, the LTTE reiterated its position that it would participate in the negotiating process only when the Sri Lankan government puts forward a clearly defined draft framework for an interim politico-administrative structure for the north east."

The LTTE also rejected in its statement "the offer made by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe of a 'provisional administrative structure' within the laws of the land as a re-statement of his previous position with a new terminology."

"We are disappointed to note that the Prime Minister's statement does not offer anything new. The so-called 'provisional administrative structure' is the new name given to the apex council proposed by him for development and rejected by us as extremely limited and inadequate," the LTTE statement said.

"The Prime Minister has not responded to our call for a draft framework for an innovative and effective politico-administrative structure. Contrary to Mr. Wickremesinghe's statement to the international donor community, we seriously differ in perception in connection with what the LTTE leadership proposes and what his government offers. While our leadership has proposed an interim administrative framework, a politico-administrative structure for the north-east with wider participation of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government has offered a council with a structure and mechanism for the development of the region. The Prime Minister is taking cover behind the laws and constitution of Sri Lanka, which have effectively institutionalised racism against which the Tamil people have been struggling for decades," the statement observed.

"Furthermore, the LTTE and Mr. Wickremesinghe's government also hold starkly divergent views as to the nature of the final political solution to end Sri Lanka's protracted ethnic conflict. While the Prime Minister envisages piecemeal reforms to the present constitution, the LTTE has proposed a

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radical transformation of the system of governance in Sri Lanka, through the institutionalisation of a new, secular and equitable constitution which recognises the Tamils' right to self-determination and homeland. It is whilst recognising that this is an impossible task for Mr. Wickremesinghe's fragile ruling coalition that our organisation proposed the establishment of an interim administration," the LTTE statement further said.

If there was any chance earlier that talks could resume on a 're-defined agenda' on setting up an interim administration for the north-east, those hopes have been dashed by the LTTE statement.

The strategy

This statement highlights several aspects of the LTTE strategy. Firstly, the LTTE is not going to rush into any type of discussion to lay its hands on the pledged aid. It wants to ostensibly set up a mechanism beforehand. The government may have been successful in persuading the donor community to pledge money for an exercise in placing the development cart before the conflict resolution horse, but the LTTE is going to insist on a north-eastern administrative structure under its full control being set up before financial aid was procured.

Secondly, the LTTE wants the framework of Wickremesinghe's proposed provisional structure to be presented in writing. While LTTE has rejected three sets of proposals submitted by the Government within the last few weeks, it itself does not want to put in writing what it is asking for. Balasingham in this connection has said, "It is not prudent on the part of the LTTE to present a structure or a mechanism for an interim administrative set-up without any idea of the scope and extent to which the government could offer politico-administrative powers to the LTTE. It is precisely for this reason we are calling upon the government to come out with its ideas." In putting the burden upon the Government for submitting a draft, the LTTE wants to highlight the divergence in perspective between itself and the government. The LTTE sees the interim politico-administrative structure exercising governmental powers in the north-east. The Tigers demanding a specific framework for such a structure instead of a structure limited to undertaking tasks of reconstruction and development. But the government perceives it as a provisional arrangement for development and reconstruction needs until the parties reach a political settlement to the conflict.

Thirdly, the Tigers know that there are legal and constitutional hurdles to setting up such a structure. When the Government submits its draft framework taking account of the constitutional constraints, the Tigers can always respond by pointing out its inadequacies describing it as unaceptable. The Tigers want it to be an extra-constitutional authority while the government envisages it as conforming to the laws of the land.

Even though Balasingham has said that the Tigers are not seeking an interim administration as an end in itself,

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Sri Lanka's End Game

The following is the text of press release issued by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) on 15 June 2003:

The murder of **Thambirajah Subathiran** (Robert) may signal the end of Sri Lanka's peace process, yet many in Colombo and the wider world will not even recognize his name. The papers would carry short notices describing him as the deputy leader of the Varatharajaperumal wing of the EPRLF, an insignificant political force by conventional assessments. But the LTTE scrutinizes its enemies very minutely, and undoubtedly came to a very different conclusion.

Subathiran was among the few remaining bold and assertive members of the beleaguered democratic scene in the North-East of Sri Lanka. Always under pressure, the democratic hope, which that movement represented, has been driven to near suffocation by LTTE repression, compounded by Norwegian arrogance and the myopic opportunism of the UNP. Though cruelly deprived of the opportunity to do greater things for his people, Subathiran's courage and his services to the Jaffna Municipal Council as a firm and clear democratic voice will be remembered. He advocated constructive cooperation with the TULF dominated Council.

During his period as councillor, two mayors, Sarojini Yogeswaran and Sivapalan, were murdered by the LTTE. Subathiran played a key role in defying the LTTE's threats and giving his fellow councillors the heart to carry on. Those who knew Subathiran were deeply struck by his large humanity and readiness to cast aside narrow loyalties for the greater welfare of the people. This was part of the Marxist inspiration the group's pioneers had imbibed. Subathiran was a pillar of strength to the last mayor, Mr. Sellan Kandaiyan, in standing up to the LTTE's intimidation and attempts to take over the functions of the Council. This brought him into direct confrontation with the LTTE and its agents, where he was firm and assured, but always a polite voice of reason. Every society in crisis produces individuals, who will, to the last, stand up for truth and justice against hopeless odds. Subathiran will surely not be the last of them in the Tamil community.

In the run-up to the recent donor meeting in Tokyo, which the Tigers decided to boycott, LTTE attacks on Tamil opponents reached alarming proportions. The Tigers have targeted not only active members of opposing groups, but also hundreds of individuals who had left these groups long ago, had young families and were leading civilian lives. Subathiran himself was struggling to help the community cope as the pressure intensified.

- On 12th June, two days before Subathiran was killed, the LTTE attacked former EPRLF member Nagamuttu Nagendran (35) in Chunnakam, Jaffna, with swords and knives. Nagendran, a father of five, screamed, and the assailants ran away leaving the victim with one hand severed and the other hanging limp.
- On 6th June the LTTE cut with a sword and badly injured reserve police constable Sathasivam Sarvananda (31), a father of two, in Thimilativu, Batticaloa.
- In the night of the same day, 6th June, the LTTE threw a grenade at two former TELO members in Kallady, Batticaloa, returning from a temple festival. One of them, Velusamy Samuel (30) was killed with his one-year-old daughter Naveena.
- The following morning (7th) Ramasamy Vijayanathan (33), a former EPDP member who was watering plants at a restaurant in Thirugnanasambandar Street, Trincomalee, where he was working, was shot dead by LTTE gun men.
- On 10th June, the LTTE shot dead Subramaniam (32), father of a child, at Maharambaikulam, Vavuniya.
- On 12th June, the LTTE threw a grenade into a Muslim restaurant in Valaichenai, which was open

(Continued from page 19)

there is no doubt that if the provisional structure is 'innovative' enough for the LTTE it would continue with this "interim arrangement" for an extremely long period under the guise of "normalisaation" and "exploring federalism".

The LTTE also want to de-link international involvement from the workings of the interim mechanism. Wickremesinghe has set about conceptualising the structure as one spending the money pledged in Tokyo for the north-east. This means an enhanced role for the donors in monitoring and indirectly supervising projects. It also means the LTTE should adhere to the minimum levels of good governance required including accountability and transparency. This is anathema to the Tigers. The LTTE, living in a world of its own, wants to use the money at its own discretion without interference. So it is quite particular about the proposed structure and wants to ensure international non-involvement.

The Colombo Government and particularly the Prime Minister may want the peace talks with the LTTE to resume as soon as possible. The international community may want to see the peace talks progress further as expeditiously as possible. However, what the LTTE's recent actions and statements reveal is that it will not return to the negotiating table in a hurry. It has sought to undermined the success of the Tokyo conference and the momentum that it could have given to the stalled peace process. It has also shown that the LTTE can be daringly defiant of international opinion by asserting its independence towards the Tokyo Declaration.

By continuing its politics of brinkmanship, it remains to be seen as to whether this dangerous course of action will result in the LTTE gaining its desired ends or lead to a complete collapse of the fragile peace process. ☐

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during an LTTE-ordered *hartal* injuring six persons. Haniffa (60) and Meerasaibo were admitted to Batticaloa Hospital with severe injuries.

- On 12th June, the LTTE shot and injured Sivasegaram Vijayasegaram (Arasan), a former member of the EPRLF, now employed as a UC driver, in Chelvanayakapuram, Trincomalee.

During this period, it fell to Subathiran to go around the North-East and visit party offices, in which local members lived under siege, to keep up their spirits. At dawn, on 14th June, Suba-thiran was killed by sniper fire from the direction of Vembadi Girls' School while exercising on the flat above the EPRLF(V) office. One bullet struck his shoulder and the other bullet had caused internal bleeding in the chest.

Shortly afterwards party members went to the school with the Police and examined a three story building from the upper floor of which it is possible to have a view of the flat on the EPRLF(V) office 200 yards away. The classrooms were locked. In one classroom, which the watcher opened for them at their request, they found the window netting cut to make space for the barrel of a rifle, a table placed near the window with the sand bag on it to keep the rifle steady, and some biscuit packets and an empty 1.5 litre bottle of soda. The Police have arrested the watcher. Party members had seen Easwaran, the LTTE's area leader for Nallur, in the Vembadi Girl's School grounds the previous afternoon. This had been denied by a school watcher with whom they checked immediately.

EPRLF- LTTE Relations

It is a tragic story of a struggle destroyed from within. The LTTE had been killing members for the EPRLF by stealth and deceit from 1985, reaching epic proportions upon the departure of the IPKF in 1990. Those who survived were refugees in India for a time, where in June 1990 the LTTE gunned down several of its leaders, including the charismatic Padmanabha.

Like Subathiran, many in the group were committed democrats. Having suffered severely at the LTTE's hands, they attempted to do political work behind the cover provided by the Indian Army. In the fight to prevent the LTTE from wrecking any political process under the Indo-Lanka Accord, democratic ideals were compromised. There was an orgy of killing and counter–killing. Subathiran's father Thambirajah too was arrested and killed by the LTTE during this period.

Several of the group's survivors painfully evaluated their experience and decided to return to Sri Lanka and do political work avoiding any operational links to the state forces. They started publishing their paper 'Puthiya-kannottam'(New Vision). This was a difficult period. The massive killing of Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan Army in 1990/91 gave the LTTE a new legitimacy in the eyes of the world. As the Army got bogged down, the Tamil Press in Colombo, and even many former militants from groups decimated by LTTE terror, and politicians like Kumar Ponnambalam who had been very critical of the LTTE, gravitated towards the LTTE's ultra-nationalist slogans. For many of them, resisting the LTTE's terror appeared futile and unrewarding.

The EPRLF reestablished its Jaffna office in 1997 and obtained 15% of the vote in the 1998 municipal elections, a creditable performance for a party that could not go out and canvass. The party found itself in deep crisis in 1999 when its General Secretary Suresh Premachandran made a deal with the LTTE and walked out with nearly all party's money and property held by him in trust. At this time the LTTE's terror too became more intense. But most members of the group stayed with Subathiran.

It is misleading to judge the significance of a party by counting votes in a skewed environment crushed by terror. Anyone familiar with the scene knows that the people long for a way out of the death trap set by the LTTE, but cannot, for the fear to express it concretely. Privately, at least, there is tremendous appreciation of people who stand up to the terror and give hope of an alternative. On the contrary, those who have joined the TNA have not done so out of any faith in the LTTE's politics, and their role is to ensure that the Tamil people are crushed. Not surprisingly, they were the cheerleaders of the UNP-Norway peace process.

No one with any passing knowledge of the LTTE can call the fate to which the Norway-sponsored cease-fire MoU subjected the non-LTTE groups, an innocent misjudgment. It was sheer cynicism. The arms these groups had for their protection were removed and the LTTE was allowed into the government-controlled areas with practically no checks. To say that the LTTE was unarmed was convenient fiction; the public knew otherwise. The SLMM and the UNP remained silent as abductions and killings of persons opposed to the LTTE accelerated. The Government even helpfully distracted the public from the LTTE's killing of Tamil members of the Sri Lankan Army, by surreptitiously pinning on the victims the label 'Tamil informants'.

Amidst murder and the abduction of children for use as combatants, the Government and Norway got the rest of the world to praise the peace process. When confronted with violations by the LTTE, they simply said that there was no evidence - evidence for which they never looked. Members of non-LTTE groups who tried to draw the attention of Norwegian or SLMM officials to their plight, found themselves effectively rebuffed, sometimes the annoyance of the officials reaching the point of rudeness. To the Norwegians, those insisting on building and preserving democratic norms were a nuisance.

Conclusion

The peace carnival is now all but over. It bought the LTTE a nearly 18 month free run to conscript children, draw up hit lists, spy and carry out its fatal missions, before returning to war. For its trouble, the Government seems to be satisfied with post-dated cheques from donors supposedly worth four and a half billion dollars.

Peace groups in Colombo, who under prodding from their overseas 'partners' praised appeasement of the LTTE in the name of peace a grand idea, have had some much belated afterthoughts about democracy and human rights in the North-East. With active encouragement from the LTTE, its agents and the TNA, they pushed for third party mediation and international involvement. The reason: neither the Tamils nor the LTTE can trust a Sinhalese government!

Now, suddenly, the LTTE does not want to talk to its Norwegian and Japanese interlocutors who were paying regular pilgrimages to the Vanni and begging it to go to the Tokyo Conference. Even

(continued on page 41)

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NEWS TRACK

Committee to probe attack on journalists: June 1 - Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has directed a committee headed by retired Judge Oliver Weerasinghe to investigate into the grenade attack on Batticaloa district journalist S. Jeyananthamoorthy who escaped injury in January when unknown assailants hurled a grenade into the journalist's home. The committee is to begin hearings in Jaffna Secretariat between 4 June to 6 June, legal

The committee will also conduct hearings during its Jaffna sessions on the assaults by security forces on three Jaffna journalists, K. Sivapalan, S. Thavachelvan and S. Manohararajah.

The Ministry of Defence has sent letters through the Information Department to the involved journalists requesting them to appear at the hearings and provide testimony on the assaults. Jaffna Tamil Journalists Union has intensively lobbied the Prime Minister to conduct inquiries and to safeguard the Tamil journalists from being assaulted by the security forces. The Journalists union also alerted the Committee for Protection of Journalists (CPJ) and other international media organizations to act to protect Tamil journalists.

Abducted PCs set free: June 1 - The two Police Constables, arrested by the LTTE last week, were released at Mutur on 30 May. Police sources said the two policemen K. Pushpakumara and Gamini Herath were arrested by the LTTE saying they had entered the Tiger controlled Serunuwara area. Following representations to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission officials and after two days in LTTE custody, the two PCs were released.

SLA builds camp in College Grounds: June 1 - Residents in Valvettiturai (VVT) in the northern shores of Jaffna said that the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) has begun construction of a camp in the sports grounds belonging to Chithampara College Saturday, according to local press reports. Sources said that SLA used to have a camp in the same premises before the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of SriLanka (GoSL). The camp was removed after the signing of the MoU.

Local protests are being organised against the setting up of the camp.

Norway's popularity plummets: June 2 - Only 38% of the Sri Lankans approve the facilitatory role played by Norway in Sri Lanka's peace process, a survey has revealed. The survey conducted by the research unit of the premier civil society group, Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) indicated that there was a steady decline in the opinion in favour of Norway. The rating stood 46.3% in November 2002 and 42.3% in January 2003.

It has also been revealed that there was a gradual decrease in the opinion that the predominantly Norwegian ceasefire monitoring team overseeing the truce between the government and the LTTE, is impartial.

Only 27% were of the view that the truce monitors were impartial, continuing the downward trend started last November with 33.2% and which stood at 30.3% in January this year.

In one of the most devastating attacks on Norway, Opposition PA spokesmen Sarath Amunugama and Mangala Samaraweera last week described the Norwegians as "salmon eating busy bodies" and demanded that they be kicked out.

Former TELO member shot dead: June 2 - Kalirajah Ramanan (35), a former member of Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and a former member of the Batticaloa Municipal Council was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Punochchimunai 7km north of Batticaloa town at 8.30pm Sunday on 1 June, security sources said. The EPRLF has accused the Tamil Tigers of carrying out the killing of Ramanan.

Ramanan stood for elections representing TELO and was elected to the Municipal council. On dissolution of the Council, he quit TELO and joined the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP). Later he left EPDP and was functioning as a member of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) - Varat-har faction, ex-militant sources said. Sources added that he left EPRLF and went to the Middle-East to work. Recently he returned from Middle-east and was living in Navatkuda with his wife and children. He was self-employedathe time of his killing, sourced said.

Ramanan was followed by two youths while he was going towards Punochchimunai. The youths shot him at point blank range with handguns and disappeared. Ramanan was killed instantly, according to security sources.

Stabbed to death in Colombo: June 2 - a Tamil youth who was closely working with the security forces in Jaffna during the mid '90s was stabbed to death in his Colombo communication centre on June 2. He was identified as Dharmalingam Gunapalan of Thunukkai, Jaffna. After being arrested in the north in the mid 1990s soon after the army captured the Jaffna peninsula, he was used as a 'masked man' to nod his head when Tamil suspects were paraded in front of him.

Picket against new army camp: June 2 - Hundreds of local students and residents of Valvettithurai in the north of Jaffna district today held a picketing campaign for about an hour opposing the establishment of a new camp of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) in the Chithamabara College grounds. All vehicular movement on Valvettithurai-Keerimalai main road came to a standstill due to picketing. Tamil National Alliance Jaffna district parliamentarian Mr.M.K.Sivajilingam also participated in the picketing.

Picketers sat across the road blocking the main entrance of the newly set up SLA camp amid more deployment of army and police personnel at the scene. Government offices, schools and shops in the area were closed down during the picketing. The SLA officials present at the scene announced through loudhailers that no one should enter the land earmarked for the new camp.

EPRLF member shot dead: June 3 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a member of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front ('Varathar' Wing), Mr.S.Kirubairaja, around 8 p.m., on 2 June Monday night in the heart of Trincomalee town, police said. The EPRLF has accused the LTTE of committing the murder of Kiruparajah.

The incident took place at Madathady junction in the eastern port town when Kirubairaja was returning home from his party office, which is located at Sea View Road, close to Inner Harbour Road junction, the police said.

Permanent appointments for volunteer teachers: June 3 – Nearly one thousand Tamil medium volunteer teachers now serving in the Northeast province are to be made permanent in their posts on the instruction of the Public Service Commission (PSC) of the central government, NE Education Ministry Secretary Mr.R.Thiagalingam said today.

Mr.Thiagalaingam said he has received the list of names of 909 Tamil medium volunteer teachers from the PSC for permanent appointment. His ministry would start sending letters of permanency probably from next week, he added.

The PSC has not sent the names of the remaining 91 volunteer

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teachers to the provincial ministry as individuals concerned have failed to submit the required information. Once the required information is furnished, they would also receive permanent appointment.

Following a prolonged campaign of agitation by the Northeast Tamil medium volunteer teachers that they should be made permanent, at a top level conference presided over by the Prime Minister, Mr.Ranil Wickremasinghe, last month in Colombo, it was decided to grant permanency to these teachers after obtaining legal advice from the Attorney General, sources said. As the advice of the AG was in favor of the volunteer teachers, the PSC approved it and instructed the Provincial PSC and the Provincial Education Ministry to grant permanency to these volunteer teachers, sources said.

EU diplomats urge Tigers against boycott: June 4 - European diplomats today warned Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers against scuttling foreign aid prospects by carrying out a threat to boycott a crucial pledging conference in Japan next week.

Heads of the diplomatic missions of Britain, the Netherlands and Switzerland held talks with Tiger leaders and asked them to attend Monday's conference in Japan, the British High Commission (embassy) said in a statement.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had announced on April 21 that they would boycott the Tokyo meet as part of their temporary pull out from peace talks with the Colombo government to protest slow delivery on promises. "The heads of missions encouraged the LTTE to seize the international opportunity that Tokyo presents to highlight the concerns and safeguard the future of the people of the northeast.

"... It will provide the opportunity to pledge funds for reconstruction and development and to define an appropriate linkage between development assistance and progress on negotiating and implementing a political settlement based on democratic principles," the statement said.

Diplomats had wanted both the government and the LTTE to jointly appeal for international aid and show their commitment to abide by the Norwegian-backed process aimed at ending three decades of ethnic bloodshed.

LTTE Death threat to EPDP organiser: June 4 - The LTTE has issued death threats to K. B. Gunaratne, organiser of the Sinhala section of the EPDP in Pottuvil, Panama in Ampara district, Pottuvil police said. Investigations revealed that two LTTE leaders along with two LTTE cadres had visited the shop of a brother of Gunaratne at Panama and had made inquiries about Gunaratne. The residents of the area had flocked to the shop and the two LTTE leaders and the two LTTE cadres had fled the scene.

The two LTTE leaders had been identified as Burami, the leader of the Komari area and Sawaraj, leader of the Akkaraipattu area. The police had informed the SLMM of this incident. Meanwhile, a police constable serving at the Ampara police identified as Sundaralingam had been abducted by the LTTE and had been held at the Karaitivu LTTE camp. He had been assaulted and thereafter released, the Ampara police said.

The constable had been admitted to the Ampara hospital.

Postpone Tokyo Conference – Thamilselvan: June 6 - LTTE political wing leader said today that they would want more time to re-consider their participation at the Tokyo conference and called for a postponement. Mr. S. P. Thamilselvan said this during his meeting with Minister P. Chandrasekaran and stated that they have not yet taken a final decision about their participation at the Tokyo meeting. They requested the minister to inform the government to postpone the talks for a few days so as to enable them to have some time to make a decision.

Minister Chandrasekaran urged the LTTE to participate at the talks, and use the opportunity to clearly explain the present situation to the international community.

World Bank team conducts field survey: June 5 - Two World bank teams now in Sri Lanka inspected four focal villages, two in Jaffna district and two in Vavuniya district in its four day field survey to assess the agricultural development works and restoration of minor irrigations tanks now being carried out by the North East Irrigated Agricultural Project (NEIAP), NEIAP sources said.

One team inspected two focal villages, Karainagar north and Irupalai south in the Jaffna district. NEIAP and agricultural department officials accompanied the World Bank team. The second team visited the two focal villages Maha Mailankulam and Mara Iluppai tank in the Vavuniya district, sources said.

The two teams on the previous day inspected two focal villages Ambahamam and Olumadu in Mullaitivu district and Periyakulam and Puthukulam in Mannar districts. They handed over sewing machines and other financial assistance to widows and youths in these villages. The teams are to inspect two focal villages, Vannerikulam and Anaivilunthan Kulam in Killinochchi districts and Madawachchiya and Oluwewa focal villages where NEIAP agricultural projects are being implemented, NEIAP sources said.

Two LTTE teenagers arrested: June 5 - The Sri Lanka navy yesterday arrested two young LTTE cadres, R. Kokilan from Nilaweli and Swendra Raza from Kumurpiddy, at Palampatar in Trincomalee and handed them to the police. The two cadres aged 16 and 14 years were travelling in the government-controlled area and were noted to be acting as spies when the security forces questioned them. They were arrested in the area where a sailor was abducted by the LTTE recently.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission said that upon obtaining information of the arrests they had been in touch with the security forces operating in the area.

SLMM spokesperson Agnes Bragadotttir said that while they had not received any complaints regarding the arrests they had been informed that the cadres were being handed over to the Trincomalee police.

Foundation stone laid for maternity home: June 5 - The foundation stone for the construction of a government maternity home at Chavakachcheri in the Jaffna district was laid today by the Regional Director of health Services Mr.T.Sivapatham who was the chief guest at the event . The hospital complex was completely destroyed when the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) launched multi-barrel artillery (MBRL) attack on the town in 2000.

The Asian Development Bank funded North-East Community Restoration Development (NECORD) project has allocated necessary funds for this project, sources said. The government-building department has prepared a project report for the reconstruction of the Chavakachcheri government hospital complex at an estimated at a cost of 300 million rupees. NECORD has allocated Rs.5.5 million for the construction of the maternity home.

North-East Emergency Reconstruction Programme (NEERP) has also allocated 5.5 million rupees for the reconstruction of the office building of the Chavakachcheri medical officer of health. Work on this project would commence shortly, a NEERP official said.

EPDP wants SLMM expanded: June 5 - The EPDP leader Douglas Devananda yesterday urged the compositionof the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) should be expanded to bring in other countries as the present SLMM which comprises Nordic countries had failed to inquire into complaints of LTTE killings made by the government and the EPDP. He said that they had made complaints to relevant police stations and to the SLMM headquarters with all necessary details of Tiger suspects including their names and whereabouts. SLMM spokesman

The CID recently arrested five suspects following the recent two

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killings of government intelligence operatives in Mt. Lavinia and Dehiwala. Of them the rider who rode the motorbike used in the former killing is now in police custody identified as 'Rangan'.

Meanwhile, the Operational Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, in a statement said that 'such incidents from north and east are duly reported when they occur directly to the SLMM as well as to the Army Headquarters (AH) by respective army units at formation level simultaneously. These incidents already reported to the SLMM at formation level are therefore not reported once again by the AH to the SLMM to avoid duplication'.

It further states that after the assassination of L. Deveraj on April 24 until May 24, a total of 18 such LTTE violations have been reported to the SLMM by the respective army units based in the North-east. However, some of the SLMM determinations on such reported occurrences are yet to be seen.

A copy of the statement had been sent to the Convenor, Free Media Movement and the SLMM spokesman.

Former SLMM spokesman Teitur Torkelsson prior to his departure maintained that steps had been taken to collect information of these killings via the SLMM sub-offices located in Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara work in which had now come to a standstill.

TULF leader will not resign under pressure: June 5 - TULF leader V. Anandasangaree, who is reportedly under pressure from the LTTE, has said that he would not quit the party leadership. "I have no intention of quitting the post unless the central committee wants me to do so. They have to pass a resolution to that effect," he said.

It is learnt that he has been under mounting pressure to hand over the leadership to a colleague who has the support of the Tigers. It has been reported widely that the Tiger leadership wants Mr Anandasangaree's immediate removal over what they described as his hostility towards them and his refusal to carry out their line unlike some other TULF MPs, mainly representing the Eastern Province.

It is said that the LTTE leadership at a May 22 meeting with the TULF leaders in Kilinochchi asked them to remove Mr. Anandasangaree from the post of President. Following this meeting it would appear that of the five TULF members who attended this meeting, three had approached Mr. Anandasangaree to urge him to step down or tone down his views on the LTTE.

Mr. Anandasangaree has expressed disappointment over the failure of some of his leading colleagues to defend him and defy the LTTE demand. A senior TULF member who did not want to be named has told the press that the party would convene a special politburo meeting once its secretary R Sampandan returned from India. "The meeting will be held to discuss Mr. Anandasangaree's letter to party members," he said.

Mr. Anandasangaree said that he could be vacated from his post as President of the party only on two grounds. "It will be upon my death or if the party passes a no-confidence motion against me. Until that I will not step down," Mr. Anandasangaree said.

However, Mr Anandasangaree is convinced that the majority of the 45-member decision making Central Committee of the TULF would stand by him. He believes that if a resolution is moved for his removal, the majority will vote against such a move.

Responding to questions, the TULF leader said that five TULF MPs recently met him to justify the Tigers demand. "They asked me to quit the leadership immediately. But I have no option but to refuse their call. It would be ridiculous for me to step down without the Central Committee endorsing a change in the leadership," he said.

Mr. Anandasangaree, who advocates a TULF policy independent of the LTTE, has said in a letter sent to party members that he will step down only if the party found him guilty of any charge levelled at him.

The TULF leader said that it would not be correct to change the leadership of any political party to satisfy some other party. The TULF leader said that Tamil speaking people should unite to win their rights. He was critical of the way some of his own people backed the ongoing Tiger bid to get rid of him from the top post and appoint a yes-man.

EU support for peace process: June 6 - The European Commission has adopted a €3.27 million decision under its Rapid Reaction Mechanism in support of the peace process in Sri Lanka. The programme includes support for the monitoring of the Cease Fire Agreement, rehabilitation of electricity lines to improve movement of people between the former conflict zones, support for the Peace Secretariat and the North East Reconstruction Fund. This additional Community funding is intended to support the Cease Fire Agreement of 22 February 2002, and to give a clear signal of the EU's and the Commission's continuing commitment to the Peace Process.

The new allocation to the Sri Lankan peace process, follows an assessment mission conducted by the Commission Services in January 2003. Part of this support will be provided through a € 3.27 million programme under the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, further support will be announced at the forthcoming Donor's Conference on Re-construction and Development to be held in Tokyo on June 9-10.

In parallel, the Commission has mobilised € 17,5 million under the Development co-operation, Humanitarian Assistance (ECHO), Demining and Aid to uprooted people budget lines. Furthermore, the European Commission will make an announcement on further assistance to the Peace Process at the Tokyo Conference on 9 and 10 June 2003. In this respect the Commission urges the LTTE to continue to participate fully in the talks and to commit itself to attending the Tokyo reconstruction conference.

After an earlier assessment mission in May 2002, the European Commission financed a programme to implement key provisions of the Cease Fire Agreement and to build confidence in the peace process. This programme of € 1.8 million, focused on highly visible actions such as the reconstruction of 55 schools in the Jaffna peninsula,

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support to the Communications Team of the Peace Secretariat and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka as well as the electrification of the Omanthi and Puliyankulam Checkpoints, demonstrates the importance the European Commission attaches to the political initiatives undertaken. This programme was followed by a second assessment mission of the Commission in January 2003 to identify further key areas for support to the Peace Process. The findings of this mission have resulted in the above programme.

300.000 refugees return home: June 6 - Some 300,000 refugees had gone back to their homes in Sri Lanka's northeast regions following a truce arranged by Norway, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today.

There had been a visible improvement in the resettlement of people officially listed as "internally displaced persons," or IDPs, the UN agency's Assistant High Commissioner, Kamel Morjane told reporters in Colombo.

"Visiting the area after 10 months the situation is quite contrasting. The change is physically visible," he said after touring the embattled areas. "I am quite optimistic that whatever the present difficulties in the peace process, the people have voted with their feet and returned to their homes."

Morjane, who is travelling to Tokyo for the aid conference, said he expected the Tigers to end the boycott and attend the conference to jointly appeal for foreign aid to rebuild the island nation wracked by three decades of ethnic bloodshed.

"The international community is behind this peace process. It will succeed whatever the difficulties they are facing now," he said.

Rs. 50 million damages claim for torture: June 6 - A thirty year old man who allegedly got blind after inhuman torture by the police has filed a civil suit claiming Rs. fifty million as damages, before Colombo District court. Sri Selvam Anton Jude who was a resident of Hospital road, Mannar at the time of the incident and presently a resident of Fountain House Lane, Colombo has cited the Attorney General as defendant.

The plaintiff in his plaint had stated that he came to Colombo during the early hours of May 20 1998. At the Pettah Central bus stand he was arrested by the Terrorist Investigaton Division (TID) of the Police. The plaintiff was blind folded and taken to an unknown place and was tortured inhumanely. He complained that his head was put in a bag filled with petrol and was assaulted with blunt weapons. Later he was taken to the sixth floor of the TID office and there his head was pushed into a bucket full of water till he struggled with breathlessness. This was repeated several times. He also was hit on his eyes with fists and burnt with cigarettes.

On June 5, 1998 he was produced before a Magistrate and was detained at Kalutara prison. The plaintiff claimed that he was not informed the reason for his arrest. Later he was produced on June 2001 before the Judicial Medical Officer who had diagnosed that the blindness was due to the assault on his eyes. On July 2002 indictment againt him was withdrawn and he was released. He complained that he could not read or write and could not do a job and was affected both mentally and physically. Court issued summons on the Attorney General returnable on July 11.

Govt. appeasing Tigers despite killings: June 6 - Following a series of killings of members of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) by LTTE, the Front has charged that despite the continuing terrorism of the LTTE, the government had abandoned the responsibility to protect all its citizens and has sought to appease the LTTE at every turn.

In a statement issued yesterday, the party stated that the government was turning a blind eye to the atrocities of the LTTE. The LTTE murders, abductions, extortions, child conscription and intimidation of political opponents continue, it said.

"LTTE steadfastly refuse to renounce terrorism and thrives in its pogrom of eliminating all its political opponents. The cowardly leaders and the misguided hit men of the LTTE have neither the ability nor the courage to engage in political debate with the democratic political organisations of the Tamils. The only programme they advocate is one of liquidating all other Tamil political groups which refuse to capitulate," the EPRLF said.

It also said that, the international community too has refrained from criticizing these gross violations of human rights by the LTTE for fear of upsetting the 'peace' applecart. "But, this is a monumental error. The government as well as the LTTE is dependent on political and material support of the international community. If the international community raises their voice in protest and demand that the LTTE should stop committing murders, abductions, extortions and acts of intimidation before a single penny is given by way of aid to Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan government, though reluctant will be compelled to act and the LTTE is bound to retreat," the party added.

US launches two big projects in Jaffna: June 6 – USAID's Deputy Administrator Frederick W. Schieck visited Jaffna on 5 June to launch two major projects, the US Embassy said. Mr. Schieck, the second ranking official of the main American Aid Agency went to the north during a visit to Sri Lanka to personally assess the flood damage and recommend more US assistance. During his visit to the Chavakachcheri Hindu College in Thenmarachchi South Division Mr. Schieck inaugurated a US aided project to provide a 2,000-gallon water tank to replace a dilapidated and contaminated water storage facility.

This project will establish a clean and safe drinking water system for the school community of 1,900 students and a staff of 83, the Embassy said. Mr. Schieck launched a second project to rebuild the science laboratory in another College. Over 800 students will benefit from this facility as they prepare for Ordinary Level science examinations. While in the Jaffna area, Mr. Schieck also visited a demining site near Sarasalai, carried out by the U.S.Government's Quick Reaction Demining Force (QRDF) which is clearing nearly 250,000 square meters of land at the invitation of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Following his visit to Sri Lanka, Mr. Schieck will attend the Tokyo Donors' Conference on 9 June.

Ex-EPDP member killed in grenade attack: June 7 – A member of the EPRLF (Varathar Wing), Chinniah Samuel alias Vinoth (31) and his 15 month old daughter Samuel Abhisha were killed instantly when a grenade exploded at Araiyampathi in Batticaloa district Friday night at 9.40pm on 6 June, according to police sources in Batticaloa. The EPRLF has blamed the LTTE for the killings.

Sivagnanam Laveena (8) who was walking on the road nearby was injured and has been admitted to Batticaloa Teaching hospital, medical sources said. The bodies of Samuel and Abhisha were taken to the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital for postmortem examinations.

Samuel who lived in Beech Road in Araiyampathi was riding in a bicycle with his daughter along Amarasingam Road after attending a yearly festival at the Kannakai Amman Temple when the grenade exploded. Samuel who was earlier operating with the EPDP later was functioning under EPRLF (Varathan group). Kattankudi police recovered another unexploded grenade at the site of the incident and are conducting investigations.

Official Language Policy to be enforced: June 7 – "Although Sinhala, Tamil and English were declared as official languages fifteen years ago Sri Lanka governments of the past have not taken adequate measures to facilitate use of Tamil in Government offices of the Northeast," said D.U.Gunasekara, Head of the Official Language Commission briefing the press Friday in Rajagiriya, Colombo.

"The official language policy mandates the use of Tamil in Government transactions in Tamil speaking areas but there has been gross negligence in enforcing the use of Tamil. Lack of language proficiency

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of Government workers, low priority given by the higher level officials to proper implementation of the language policy and shortage of funds are the main reasons for this failure," said Mr. Gunasekara.

Although Police officers in the Northeast have been instructed to record complaints and obtain statements from witnesses in Tamil, currently this practice is not followed because of the lack of proficiency in Tamil of the majority of officers who are Sinhalese. A circular is being sent out to make it mandatory for the Police officers to attach the written statement in Tamil by the witnesses in the records book, Mr. Gunasekara said. In additions, Pradeshya sabhas across the Northeast have been directed to make arrangements to facilitate issuing birth, death and wedding certificates in Tamil.

Mr. Gunasekera added that the Government Publications Department is being instructed to enforce strict procedures to ensure that all Government publications are produced in Tamil, English and Sinhala. Arrangements are also being made to teach Tamil to the Sinhala officials in Health, Education and Police departments working in Northeast. His office will be focusing on taking steps to enforce the use of Tamil in Government offices, the Commissioner added.

EPDP cadre shot dead in Trincomalee: June 7 - Unidentified gunmen early morning today shot dead Raju Wijenathan alias Wijeyan, a thirty three year old Tamil who was a member of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) when he was staying in his brother's restaurant, Trincomalee Police said.

During the past two weeks, two others have been shot dead by unidentified persons in Trincomalee and its outskirts, security sources said. One member of the EPRLF Varathar wing Mr.S.Kirubairaja was shot dead at Madathady junction in the heart of Trincomalee town and a sixty year old Tamil, Mr.Sivagurunathan, was shot dead at Salli, about three km north of Trincomalee town, police said. The EPRLF and EPDP have attributed these killings to the Tamil Tigers.

Muslims ask for their lands: June 7 - The Council of Muslims of Sri Lanka yesterday called upon the government to establish an Arbitration and Monitoring Committee to look into and give back the lands of the Northern Muslims who were evicted by the LTTE 12 years ago.

The National Muslim Movement (NMM), President, M. H. Mahroof, addressing a media conference said according to the country's constitution, the lands would be prescribed if not enjoyed for 10 years.

"But when it comes to the case of the Muslims of the North, they have not been enjoying their lands for more than 12 years, but this has not happened wilfully. They were chased away from their lands, and they should get their lands back," he said.

He also recommended the Arbitration and Monitoring Committee should comprise of 12 members - nine members representing the Northern Muslim Refugees who number around 100,000, with a government representative, and LTTE representatives and the Committee should be chaired by a representative by the UNHCR. "He added the main objective of this committee should be to legally restore the lands to the evicted Muslims," he added.

Dr. Mahroof also said under the Ceasefire Agreement, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission(SLMM) had no mandate to entertain complaints from Muslims. They could only entertain complaints from the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE. "Where do the Muslims go to lodge their complaints when they face problems," he queried.

"We propose a Muslim representation of at least 20% in the Apex body. And in the event of the setting up of the proposed boards for the interim administrative structure, we propose the same, a Muslim representation of at least 20%.

Tension as police arrest murder suspects: June 7 - Tension gripped Puttur during June 6 morning, when Police arrested the Puttur LTTE leader and another cadre in connection with the killing of a sergeant attached to the National Defence Corps on May 19. Police sources said that police had enough evidence to prove that the LTTE suspects, V. Paranitharan and S.Sathiaraj, were directly involved in the murder. Sergeant K Nawasuriya of the NDC was murdered on May 19, at Puttur, by two suspected LTTE cadres.

Police sources also said that following the arrest of the two LTTEers, the Batticaloa political leader Senadirajah arrived in Puttur in Batticaloa, which is a government-controlled area and protested against the arrest in the presence of SLMM members.

India approves Indo-Lanka ferry service: June 7 - Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to sign a MoU with Sri Lanka on starting a ferry service between Tuticorin and Colombo ports and establish a joint committee to work out modalities for its implementation. The MoU also envisages strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the field of merchant shipping in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, an official spokesman said after the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Aimed at strengthening tourism ties and facilitate movement of low budget passengers between the two countries, the issue of launching ferry services was discussed by the Indo-Sri Lankan Sub-Commission on Trade, Finance and Investment in December 1998. The MoU also features extension of similar services between other ports of the two countries with mutual consent.

While these proposed services could be discontinued on security grounds at the request of either country, the frequency of service and its provider would be decided by mutual consent, he said. A Joint Committee would be established for efficient implementation of the MoU, which would be effective from the date of signing by both parties and remain in force for a period of five years.

Ten more electrification schemes in Jaffna: June 8 - Another ten rural electrification schemes in the Jaffna peninsula completed by the Ceylon Electricity Board at a total cost exceeding Rs. 60 million became functional from 8 June making the total number of houses provided with electricity in the Jaffna peninsula alone a record 65,000 houses.

On behalf of the Minister of Power & Energy, Karu Jayasuriya the Minister of Hindu Religious Affairs, T. Maheswaran declared open these 10 Rural Electrification Schemes which would enable the provision of 3200 houses with electricity, according to a press release from the Power and Energy Ministry.

Under these schemes Karinagar (East), Idumpan, Sillalai, Thoddilady, Pannalai, Thurkapuram, Atchuvely, Mandan, Earlalai and Idikadu villages would be provided with electricity.

Rs 43m. for development projects in Vanni: June 8 - Under the North-East Irrigation Agriculture Project a sum of Rs. 43 million has been allocated for the implementation of 240 development schemes in Vanni. The aim of this project is to promptly develop places in uncleared areas (under the control of the LTTE) earmarked for resettlement, and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons, according to Vavuniya Government Agent, K. Ganesh.

Thirty-five villages in the Vanni will be developed under this project with the construction of 35 tanks, 35 public buildings, 100 drinking water wells and 140 kilometres of roads. Most of the projects are reported to have been completed.

Measures have also been taken to grant a sum of Rs. 8.6 million to low-income families for self-employment enterprises. Sixty-nine families displaced in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi have already gone to resettle in their original abodes after living in refugee camps for over a period of about four years. They have also been provided with basic facilities including housing construction by the government.

NECORD helps build war destroyed school buildings: June 8 - Two new school buildings constructed at a cost of about three million rupees by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded North East Com-

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munity Restoration Development (NECORD) programme in the re-settled Tamil villages Kumburupiddy and Kuchchaveli in the north of Trincomalee district were declared open on Saturday 7 June.

NECORD Project Director Mr.T.Lankaneson and Northeast Provincial Education Ministry Secretary Mr.R.Thiagalingam declared open the buildings at Kumburupiddy Methodist Mission Tamil Mixed School and Kuchchaveli Vivekananda Maha Vidiyalayam respectively.

Kumburupiddy and Kuchchaveli are among several Tamil villages in the north of Trincomalee district during military operations during the period between 1985 and 1990. Residents of these villages were displaced and sought refuge outside Trincomalee district. Most of the school buildings were destroyed.

Kumburupiddy Methodist Mission Tamil Mixed School located 22 km off Trincomalee town, was closed from 1985 till 1996 due to the displacement of villagers following violence. The school was re-opened in 1996 and classes were conducted in an old building in six rooms.

The number of students now studying in the school has risen to 183. Classes were conducted under shades of trees due to the non-availability of classrooms. Now the NECORD has constructed a building with six classrooms at a cost of about 1.5 million rupees. NECORD Project Director Mr.Lankaneson opened this building Saturday.

Kuchchaveli Vivekananda Maha Vidiyalayam which is located 34 km north of Trincomalee town was destroyed in 1990 violence and Tamil families in the village were displaced to other districts and sought refuge in welfare and refugee camps.

Only about 155 students attend this school, which till Saturday functioned in one building.

The new building constructed at a cost of 1.2 million rupees was declared open by the NE Provincial Education Ministry Mr.R.Thiagalingam. The new buildings were constructed under the supervision of NECORD Trincomalee district Deputy Director Mr.R. Umakanthan.

Clearing mines will take six years: June 8 - A Scottish technical expert in the field of mine clearing, Mr. Deim, said that it would take at least six years to clear all landmines buried in the Northeast. He also said that the estimate of a total of one million landmines is too low and that he suspects the number to be much higher, according sources in Kilinochchi.

Mr. Deim added that the maps provided by the Sri Lanka security forces containing areas where the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) buried the landmines do not point to precise co-ordinates of landmine locations but simply indicate large patches of land where mines are likely to be buried.

"These maps are hardly adequate for speedy removal of mines. The imprecise maps maintained by the military will present a severe impediment to completing the mine clearing effort in the previously estimated time of one or two years," the Scottish expert added.

Three Lankans arrested in Japan: June 9 - Three persons among a group of Sri Lankans alleged to have links with the JVP were arrested by the Japanese Police in Sawara, Chiba Prefecture in Japan in the afternoon on 8 June when they instigated a commotion and attempted to disrupt a religious ceremony held under the patronage of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The incident occurred at the Lankaji Temple in Sawara in the Chiba Prefecture, Japan after Premier Wickremesinghe inaugurated the construction work on a newly Dagoba at the Lankaji Temple. The proceedings of the function continued without any incident about one hour and tension arose when a group of youth surrounded the Prime Minister who had just left the stage.

While criticizing the current peace process, the group started shouting various slogans and hurling various comments at the Prime Minister. They accused the Premier that he was trying to betray the country by granting an interim administration of the northeast of Sri Lanka to the LTTE. The group continued shouting even after the Premier left the scene. They even blamed and attempted to attack Ven. Banagala Upatissa, President of the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and Chief Incumbent of Lankaji Temple. Ven. Banagala Upatissa Thera said the arrested youth were staying in Japan illegally without Visas or work permits.

The proposed Dagoba at the Temple is to be constructed at a cost of Rs 120 million. The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited has also donated Rs one million for the construction of the temple.

A large number of people including Sri Lankans living in Japan and Japanese citizens were present at the temple when this incident occurred.

PM ready to amend constitution: TOKYO, June 9: Sri Lanka's prime minister launched a major effort to revive peace talks with Tamil Tiger on today, saying he was willing to alter the constitution to meet their demand for a regional interim administration.

"It is now important that we develop a roadmap with milestones to get there," Wickremesingh said. "In this context we would need to set up an innovative provisional administrative structure. "It will be responsible for the reconstruction and development of the north east and the administrative aspects of the transitional process."

Speaking as donors pledged more than $2 billion for the country at the start of an aid conference in Tokyo, Ranil Wickremesinghe said once a political solution to end the 20-year conflict had been reached, his government would call a referendum to endorse changes to Sri Lanka's constitution. "We will introduce constitutional reforms when we have negotiated a final political solution, which we are fully committed to take to the people of Sri Lanka through a referendum for the ultimate decision," he told the conference, itself seen as a crucial step towards cementing the fragile peace process.

Donors pledge $4.5 million in aid: TOKYO, June 10 - International donors wound up a two-day pledging conference here today promising 4.5 billion dollars in aid over four years to help rebuild strife-torn Sri Lanka, Japan's special peace envoy said. The amount includes one billion dollars each from Japan and the Asian Development Bank and 293 million dollars from the European Union.

"This tangible contribution is a vote of confidence in Sri Lanka," said Japan's envoy Yasushi Akashi during the conference closing ceremony.

Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the aid pledged would "lay the foundation for realisation of our goal of a peaceful Sri Lanka in which all people could live in harmony, peace and dignity."

In exchange for their support, donors will make periodic reviews of the progress of the peace process, they said in the final declaration. "In view of the linkage between donor support and progress in the peace progress, the international community will monitor and review the progress in the peace process," it said.

Full compliance with the cease-fire agreement, effective protection of human rights, and the conclusion of an agreement between the government and rebels on a verifiable "de-escalation, de-militarisation and normalisation process" are among the conditions for the release of the promised aid, the declaration said.

The conference was hosted by Japan and attended by representatives of 51 countries and 22 international organisations, including Sri Lankan peace broker Norway, the United States, and the World Bank. The Tamil Tigers boycotted the aid meeting to protest the alleged failure of the Colombo government to deliver on promises made to them at six rounds of face-to-face talks since September.

During the session, Wickremesinghe announced his government was prepared to set up an "innovative provisional administrative structure" responsible for the reconstruction of the embattled northeast and the administrative aspects of the transitional process.

Japanese officials will report the outcome of the Tokyo confer-

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ence to representatives and negotiators of the Tamil Tiger in Sri Lanka and London.

LTTE suspect taken into custody: June 9 -An armed LTTE suspect was arrested by the Navy, while he was near the Kumburupiti Navy camp in Trincomalee on June 7 Saturday night. Navy sources said the LTTE cadre arrested had a T-56 assault rifle, three-hand grenades and 141 rounds of ammunition on him. The suspect has later been handed over to the Trincomalee harbour police for further investigations. Another LTTE cadre, had earlier been arrested with a weapon by the Navy and handed over to the Trincomalee harbour police.

Policemen missing in east: June 10 - Two Sri Lanka Police personnel were reported missing in Chenkalady, 16 kilometres north of Batticaloa, June 10 Tuesday night. The two, deployed at the Eravur Police station, were riding a motorbike off duty when unidentified persons are believed to have abducted them. Police have attributed the abduction of the policemen to the LTTE.

Chenkalady and Eravur were tense as Police searched for the missing Policemen, according to residents. Police sources in Eravur said the whereabouts of the Policemen was not yet known.

Suspect attempts suicide: June 11 - A suspect alleged to be a LTTE cadre had been admitted to the Kalubowila hospitalon 10 June evening, after he tried to commit suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule. A senior police officer said that a Colombo Crime Division official on a tip off tried to question two Tamil youth at a checkpoint opposite the Savoy cinema, Wellawatte, at around 6 pm, who were alleged to be members of the LTTE pistol group.

One cadre when confronted had swallowed a cyanide capsule, and was admitted to the Kalubowila hospital. The other cadre was arrested along with a Browning type pistol with ammunition by CCD officers.

Following several murders carried out allegedly by the LTTE's pistol group members, the police launched a special investigation to try and track down those members.

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NGO to assist farmers affected by HSZ: June 11 - An international non-governmental organization ACTIONFAIM has formulated a scheme to provide livelihood assistance to resettled villagers in Thenamaradchchi division in Jaffna district who are unable to cultivate their agricultural lands occupied by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), divisional secretariat sources said.

ACTIONFAIM is an NGO, which has its headquarters in Paris and works against hunger among the poor.

In the first phase about four thousand beneficiaries in eight village level (Grama Niladhari) divisions will receive assistance from ACTIONFAIM, divisional secretariat sources said.

Since the signing of the Cease-Fire Agreement by the government and LTTE more than two thousand farmers have resettled in their own lands in Thenmaradchchi division. However, the SLA has not allowed these resettled villagers to cultivate their paddy lands which are within the high security zone.

Villagers say the SLA assured last year that they would be allowed to cultivate a portion of lands at Kohilakandy, Thanankilappu and Maravanpolo areas, but SLA has made no moves towards allowing farmers to resume cultivation.

Grenade attack on Trinco EPDP office: June 11 - Unidentified men lobbed grenades at the Trincomalee office of the Eelam Peoples' Democratic Party (EPDP) on June 10 Tuesday night, police said. The roof of the building was damaged, but no one was injured, according to police sources.

EPDP Trincomalee district organizer Mr.T.Pushparajah who was inside the EPDP office at that time had told the police that attack was aimed at his room. He is reported to have accused the LTTE for the attack. Police and army immediately cordoned the area and conducted search operation soon after the incident. The police and army on the following day early morning held a house-to-house search operation in the area where the EPDP office is located.

Polikandy resident abducted: June 11 - Mr.Thambithurai Kulasingham,50, a resident of Polikandy in the Vadamarachchi division of the Jaffna district, is alleged to have been abducted by a group of persons in a white Hi-ace van when he was returning from the Nelliyadi police station 10 June, Tuesday evening, police sources said. Mr.Kulasingham's son, twenty year old Mr.Viji, received injuries when he attempted to rescue his father from the abductors, the police sources said

This incident took place at the Kalaandy junction in the Thikkam area when Mr. Kulasingham was returning in his car with his wife and son from Nelliyadi. Mr. Kulasingham was dragged out of his car by a group of persons who took him in their Hi-ace van, according to a complaint lodged at the police station.

Sri Lanka Police could not identify a motive for the abduction and are continuing investigations.

LTTE demands release of arrested member: June 12 - The LTTE demanded the release of its Puliyanthivu, Batticaloa district head of political wing, Sathiyaraj, as a condition for releasing the two Sri Lanka Police officers LTTE abducted in Chenkaladi on 10 June, security sources in Batticaloa said.

Sathiyaraj was arrested by Razeek group members on 5 June in Putur and was handed over to Sri Lanka Police. Sathiyaraj was produced in courts and is currently in remand accused of killing Navasooriyam of Razeek group recently in Putur. LTTE said that it condemned the arrest of Sathiyaraj while he was unarmed and was engaged in political work and demanded that he is released immediately.

Sources say that the members of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission

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(SLMM) are meeting with the LTTE officials to discuss the matter.

Three injured in Trinco grenade attack: June 12 - Unidentified men last night lobbed grenades at a house in Orr's Hill area and fired at a person in Chelvanayakapuram area, suburbs in the Trincomalee town causing injuries to three persons including a woman, Trincomalee police said. Mr.S. Visuvanathan and his mother are reported to have been wounded in the grenade attack that took place at Orr's Hill area.

Mr.Visvanathan contested 2001 general election in Trincomalee district in a political party called Citizen Front led by a former minister Mr. Sirisena Cooray in the then UNP government led by late President Premadasa. Mr.Visvanathan who received leg injuries was transferred to Kandy hospital for further treatment, medical sources said.

The person injured in a shooting incident at Chelvanayakapuram which is located about two km off north Trincomalee town is yet to be identified, hospital sources said.

Pistol group members identified: June 12 - The LTTE cadre who swallowed a cyanide capsule in Wellawatta on June 10 evening had been identified as a member of the LTTE's pistol gang in Batticaloa. Kalubowila Hospital sources said that he was in a state of unconsciousness by yesterday afternoon.

The LTTE cadre was rushed to the Kalubowila Hospital after he swallowed a cyanide capsule. Police caught three LTTE cadres at a checkpoint when they stopped a suspicious three-wheeler. Among the other two cadres one had been identified as Vairamuthu Nithyanandan alias Nithi of Jaffna, and the other as P Selvarasa alias Niranjan from Batticaloa. Police said he had a pistol and ammunition in his possession when he was arrested. He had been employed at a cinema hall in Kotahena for the past four years. The other was a three-wheeler driver from Colombo.

At the time the arrest was made the LTTE cadres had been travelling to Kotahena from Wellawatta. Police suspect that the cadres must be in the group that carried out several killings of army intelligence operatives and Tamil soldiers in Colombo and other parts of the country. Police said they had been able to arrest several LTTE cadres who were responsible for the killings of intelligence operatives recently.

The pistol found in the possession of the suspect who attempted suicide would be subjected to forensic examination to ascertain whether it had been used in any other killings, Police Chief T.Anandarajah told the press. He also said that the CID has been tasked to investigate into the antecedents of the cadre and his companion.

Inquiries have disclosed that the two LTTE cadres taken into custody had allegedly come on a mission to kill a soldier called "PLOT Mohan" who is attached to the Army Intelligence Unit, police said. Some photographs of "PLOT Mohan" in various postures and a letter written by Batticaloa Tiger Intelligence Unit head, Ramanan were found in the trishaw in which the two LTTE cadres were travelling. It was revealed that their target "PLOT Mohan" was in the habit of going to the Wellawatte beach every morning for exercise, hence the plan to kill. They had with them a pistol and 15 bullets at the time of arrest.

Inquiries had further disclosed that the cadres had purchased a trishaw for Rs. 140,000 after coming to Colombo.

The trishaw was purchased from a person in Orugodawatte. The cadres had told the owner he could continue to hire out the three wheeler, but should make it available for their use with the driver whenever it was required by them.

Four injured in grenade attack: June 13 - Four persons were wounded in a grenade attack in Valaichenai, 32 km. north of Batticaloa, last evening. Police and Army soldiers have been put on security alert following the incident, security sources said. The wounded were identified as S.M.Haniffa (30), Anvar (31), Ahmed Meerashahib (60) and Haniffa (41). The incident occurred at the Main street in Valaichenai. Tension prevailed in Valaichenai town as the news of the grenade attack spread.

22 nabbed in Negombo: June 13 - A group of 22 Lankans, who tried to flee to Italy illegally were arrested by the Negombo Police yesterday. Twelve Sinhala youth and eight Tamils were taken into custody at dawn from a Rest House in Negombo on a tip-off, Police said.

Initial investigations revealed that the would be migrants had paid Rs.50,000 each as an instalment to a member of a powerful business ring. Police suspect that around five businessmen in Sri Lanka and abroad were involved in the human smuggling racket where each businessman gets his own "cut".

"The youth from the Wennappuwa, Thoduwawe, Trincomalee and Batticaloa areas who were packed up and ready for the journey had stayed at the rest house for six days until the businessman had finalised arrangements with a fishing trawler", Negombo Police said.

LTTE demands release in return: June 13 - The LTTE F said it would release the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) soldier, Mr.S.T.Ruwankumara, who is in its custody in Trincomalee district in exchange of its cadre Kururathan now in remand for more than a year, sources said.

The LTTE cadres took the SLN soldier into custody last month when he allegedly entered the LTTE controlled area at Kadawanai in Thampalakamam divisional secretariat division in Trincomalee district with arms.

LTTE Trincomalee district political head Mr.S.Tilak said one year ago soon after signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the LTTE the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) arrested a LTTE cadre Kururathan at Thampalakamam. Since then he is in remand. He should be released soon if the GoSL is interested in the release of the SLN soldier in LTTE custody, Tilak added.

Military sources said the LTTE cadre Kururathan was arrested for allegedly possessing weapons.

Measles immunization programme: June 13 - Sri Lanka's health ministry today launched its first national level measles immunization programme in the country. The inaugural event was held for the time in the northeast province and the programme would be extended to other provinces in the country in September, October 2003, health ministry sources said.

Inaugurating the first phase of the national level measles immunization programme in the Tamil village of Thampalakamam in the Trincomalee district, Provincial Governor's Secretary Mr.S. Amirthalingam commended the dedicated service of medical officers and related health officials who worked in the northeast during the war period.

The phase 1 will be conducted as a school based immunization programme since most of the target population (10-14 years) consists of school going children. Mobile clinics will be conducted in inaccessible and difficult areas with the help of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGO). Mobile clinics and special temporary centres will be set up to reach non-school going population of the target group, estate sector and school dropouts, health officials said.

Dr.T.Thavakodirajah who is in charge of the measles immunization programme for the northeast province and Trincomalee Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP) Nutrition and Health Advisor Ms Gabriele Goetz and other officials participated at the inaugural event, sources said.

The first phase of the measles immunization programme will target all children between 1-14 years of age and phase two, those between 16 and 20 years of age. The second phase will be conducted in 2004, provincial health officials said.

Mopping up campaigns (house-to-house immunization activities) will be conducted to identify children who have missed routine immunization and previous mass campaigns. These campaigns will take place soon after follow-up campaigns in areas known or thought to have many remaining susceptible children, officials said.

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Abduction of 2 policemen: June 13 - Two Police constables Senadheera (34) (PC 28787) and Nihal (34) (RPC 4397) attached to the Traffic division of the Eravur Police station were abducted by the LTTE on June 10 Tuesday evening in a government-controlled area and the LTTE demanded the release of LTTE cadre Subaru Devanayagam for the release of these two Police officers.

SLMM spokeswoman Agnes Bragadottir said the arrest of two Police constables by the LTTE in a government controlled area is a "totally unacceptable" situation and the issue will definitely raised by Telefssen, Head of SLMM, when he met the LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi. The arrest of the LTTE cadre by the Police and the abduction of two Police officers were incomparable situations since the arrest of the LTTE cadre by the Police is purely a civil matter, Bragadottir added. The spokesperson said the SLMM chief had expressed the view that the demand for the exchange of one LTTE cadre for the two police constables did not appear to be fair as the LTTEer held in police custody was taken in, in relation to a killing.

The SLMM Chief also would take up the issue of the release of the sailor under the LTTE custody. He was taken into custody by the LTTE in Kattaparichchan in Trincomalee nearly one month back. The LTTE defied the SLMM demand for the release of the sailor going against their earlier pledge that they would abide by the SLMM rulings.

Former EPRLF member shot: June 14 - A former EPRLF member was wounded when he was shot at by a member of the LTTE at Selvanayagampuram, Uppuveli in the Trincomalee district on 12 June. The former EPRLF member, identified as Sivasekera Wijesekeram (60) had been admitted to the Uppuveli hospital. When Sivasekera Wijesekaram visited his uncle's house the LTTE member had followed him and opened fire at him.

In another incident, an armed individual had wounded a mother and son at Osiligama, Trincomalee by shooting at them.

Senior political leader shot dead in Jaffna: June 14 - An unidentified sniper is reported to have shot dead Mr. Kandiah Subathiran alias Robert, the most senior member of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (Varathar wing) on 14 June, Saturday morning around 6.30 when he was doing physical exercise in the upper floor of the EPRLF (Varathar wing) office which is located along the Jaffna hospital road.

Forty-year-old Mr. Subathiran was immediately taken to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital where he was pronounced dead on admission.

Police and army officials in the Jaffna district rushed to the hospital and to the scene of incident, cordoned off the area around EPRLF office and started investigation into the murder, police said. The EPRLF has accused the Tamil Tigers of carrying out Subathiran's murder, but the LTTE has not responded to the accusation.

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Mr.K. Subathiran is the most senior in the EPRLF Varathar wing and is considered as second only to Mr.C.Varatharajaperumal, the leader of the party and a former Chief Minister in 1989of the now defunct northeast Provincial Council. Mr. Subathiran was a member of the dissolved Jaffna Municipal Council and unsuccessfully contested as the lead candidate of the EPRLF Varathar wing at the last parliamentary election 2001 in the Jaffna district. Mr. Subathiran was a native of Udupiddy in Jaffna district. At that time of his death he was in charge of the EPRLF (Varathar wing) political activities in the northeast.

Additional government troops and police personnel were deployed today in Jaffna town and its suburbs following the killing of Subathiran's..

The security at three main SLA checkpoints at Vallai on Jaffna-Point Pedro road, Ayam on Point Pedro-Chavakachcheri road and Mulli on Point Pedro-Kodikamam road were tightened from 8 a.m. till five p.m. Civilians and vehicles were thoroughly checked by security forces at these checkpoints, sources said.

Passengers were asked to get down from buses and vehicles, and bags and baggage of passengers were checked by security before the vehicles were allowed to continue their journey, sources said.

LTTE Protest against checks: June 14 - The LTTE today complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) was violating the ceasefire agreement by checking civilians who pass through main checkpoints at Vallai on Jaffna-Point Pedro road, Ayam on Point Pedro-Chavakachcheri road and Mulli on Point Pedro Kodikamam Road in the Jaffna peninsula.

During the morning, following the killing of a EPRLF senior member Mr.Subathiran, SLA commenced checking civilians who passed through these checkpoints.

The LTTE political activists in Vadamarachchi brought to the notice of the SLMM head the activities of the SLA, which violate the ceasefire agreement. LTTE activists told the SLMM head that army field groups wre engaged in patrolling the area in a way intimidating the civilians. Members of army intelligence also frequently interfered in civilian life, they complained

The SLA had alleged that the LTTE cadres were in possession of high frequency communication equipment. But LTTE members had claimed that they were using communication equipments, which had been brought through A9 highway with the permission from the authorities concerned.

Grenade explosion injures four: June 15 - Four people were injured when a grenade thrown by unknown assailants exploded near a butcher store in the Muslim market in Valaichenai, 32km north of Batticaloa town, at 10.15 am today, according to Batticaloa police sources. The injured were immediately taken to Meeravodai Hospital for treatment, according to local medical sources.

Following the grenade blast businesses were closed and the town was deserted. Additional police and security forces were brought into Valaichenai town to strengthen security, according to security sources.

EPDP cadre shot dead in Batticaloa: June 15 - Ponniah Ramachandran (42), a member of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) and a father of three children, was shot dead by unknown gunmen around 11am today along the Batticaloa-Kallady Thiruchenthoor Road in eastern Batticaloa, according to reports from there.

Ramachandran was originally from Vakarai area but left Vakarai to first join the Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and then was operating as a member of EPDP.

He worked as a political operative at the EPDP office and was on his way to his home in Kallady when two unidentified gunmen shot him at point blank range. Ramachandran died instantly, according to Police sources. Seven bullet wounds were found in his body. A grenade was also exploded at the murder site, accordind to Police sources.

Ramachandran was preparing to stand for the forthcoming council

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elections on the 25th as an EPDP candidate. Head of Batticaloa district EPDP, Paranitharan Prathipan, blamed the LTTE for the killing and said that three EPDP members have been killed in Batticaloa district in recent weeks. LTTE denied any responsibility for the killing.

SLA vacates Thiruketheeswaram temple: June 16 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) which have been occupying the buildings of the Thiruketheeswaram temple in Mannar have rently vacated the premises, according to local reports.

Steps have been taken recently by the SLA to vacate public buildings and temples in other areas of Mannar district. Mannar district Government Agent V. Visvalingam accompanied mine clearing groups to survey the areas vacated by the SLA to initiate clearing operations to facilitate resettlement of displaced people.

Devotees of Thiruketheeswaram had to undergo severe hardships to be able to attend the yearly festivals which were conducted with strict SLA supervison during the past several years.

EPRLF seeks end to LTTE killing spree: June 16 - The EPRLF (Varathar faction) called on the government, the opposition, human rights groups, the diplomatic community and members of the civic society to act immediately to bring an end to the LTTE's killing spree and other acts of violence. In a tribute released by the party to commemorate the slain EPRLF deputy leader Thambirajah Subathiran, the EPRLF said:

"We strongly and vehemently condemn the brutal assassination by the LTTE of Comrade Thambirajah Subathiran alias Robert of the EPRLF on 14.06.03 early morning at the EPRLF office at Hospital Road, Jaffna. Born in Nunavil, Chavakachcheri on 24.12.1957 Comrade Subathiran strived for the rights of the Tamil People, the working classes, the depressed castes, and for women's rights. His commitment to these just struggles began during his school days. He joined the EPRLF at its very inception in the eighties and devoted his entire life for the party, remaining a bachelor till his untimely death at the age of 46. In 1985 he was arrested by the Sri Lankan Army and detained for more than two years. He was released in 1987 after the Indo-Lanka Accord. He continued this party work with commitment and dedication during the period of the EPRLF-led North-East Provincial Council when Comrade A. Varatharajaperumal was the Chief Minister. ...

"He was the only son in the family and is survived by his aged mother and the elder sister. Incidentally, Com. Subathiran's father Thambirajah was kidnapped and murdered by the LTTE in 1990 soon after the de-induction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

"He returned to Sri Lanka in 1994 and continued with his party work. In 1997 the EPRLF contested the local government elections in the North and Com. Subathiran was elected a member of the Jaffna Municipal Council. He involved himself enthusiastically in all the restructuring activities of the Jaffna Municipal Council including the reconstruction of the Jaffna Public Library. He played a keen role along with other Council Members in the effort to reopen the Jaffna Public Library for the use of the public. But, the LTTE through threats and undue influence vetoed this effort....

"The megalomaniacal LTTE clan in their attempt for a totalitarian control of the North-East, are of late treacherously, villainously and brutally involved in a spate of killings of the Tamil political leaders who do not toe their line and who vociferously advocate democracy, pluralism and human rights in the North-East. The nihilism of the LTTE has only relegated the Tamil people to the status of orphans without a leadership.

"We therefore earnestly appeal to the government, opposition parties, the diplomatic missions, human rights activists, NGOs and the intelligentsia to move in this matter immediately with a view to bringing an end to the killings and other brutal activities by the LTTE. Com. Subathiran may not be the last 'Peace Dove' or the last victim felled by the LTTE. It is also more than a mere coincidence that the funeral of Comrade Subathiran on June 19, should coincide with the 13th death anniversary of our leader and mentor Comrade Pathmanabha."

LTTE refuses search of office: June 16 - The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) members in Jaffna were able to diffuse the tension built up in Chullipuram area in Jaffna district when soldiers of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) and Sri Lanka Army (SLA) this morning surrounded the LTTE political office located at Vallakambarai- Chullipuram and attempted to search it.

The soldiers had gone to the LTTE office with a warrant from the Magistrate to search the premises in the wake of the murder of the EPRLF leader Mr Subathiran on 14 June. But the LTTE members in the office objected to the search and warned the troops that they would swallow cyanide capsules if they forcibly entered their political office, according to LTTE sources.

Monitors of the SLMM arrived at the site and brought the situation under control as the soldiers withdrew from the area without executing the warrant issued by the Magistrate.

US to continue pressure on LTTE: Washington, June 17. (PTI): The United States has said it would continue to "hunt down" the LTTE and force it to give up the use of violence as a political weapon. "We have designated the LTTE as a foreign terrorist organisation.... In fact we will hunt them down and try to stop their finances. We would like them to work into a situation in which they are no longer a foreign terrorist organisation. They could do that by giving up, once and for all, violence as a political weapon," Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, said in an interview released yesterday.

He warned that those who did not take the opportunity offered by the Lankan dialogue process, will be judged "harshly" by history. Pointing that India had a lot of influence in the region, Armitage said that the Ranil Wickremesinghe government was keeping New Delhi well informed about the progress of talks.

"I know that the government of Ranil Wickremesinghe keeps Indian officials well advised on the status of deliberations in Colombo. I think that is the proper way ahead," he said.

On the donors agreeing to provide support of $ 4.5 million to Sri Lanka at the Tokyo meet last week, Armitage said it "exceeded the wildest expectations of the organisers."

Gunmen kill Councillor: June 18 - Unidentified gunmen shot dead a Provincial Council member in the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital overnight, prompting a strong protest by his fellow members opposite the parliament against the government's failure to provide proper security for politicians and its failure to curb the increasing crime rate.

The member of the Provincial Council of the Western Province, Sunil Mendis was gunned down on June 16, Monday night, at his residence in Ragama, 15 kilometres north of the capital. A gang arrived in a van, stormed into his house and opened fire with an automatic weapon. His family said that the gang then fired into the air and escaped in the van.

Provincial Council members staged a protest opposite Parliament yesterday blaming the government and Interior Minister John Amaratunga for their failure to provide proper protection for politicians. The protests were joint by Opposition Leader, Mahinda Rajapaksha who said that government has not been able to protect the people. The killing came less than four weeks after another provincial

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council minister from the southern province was gunned down opposite police headquarters in Colombo when he was returning from the Criminal Investigation Department.

Over the past few weeks there has been a steady increase in the crime rate with a series of murders. Among those killed were politicians, gang members and civilians. Police have not been able to contain the increasing crime rate despite being relieved of their duties in fighting terrorism.

Abducted students escape: June 18 - Three students abducted by the LTTE from their Eastern Province homes escaped from their captors and sought the protection of the Sri Lankan security forces , the Sri Lanka Army announced.

The escape of the three teenagers, students attending two government schools at Pethale and Kalawanchikudy, was revealed following another escape five days before by five female LTTE cadres from their camp who sought the protection of the Aralaganwila police, near Dimbulagala.

The Sri Lanka Army said the three abducted students who fled from LTTE custody first reached troops on picket duties at Sittandy, about 24 kilometers from Batticaloa town. June 17.

They told the government troops that they were held at an undisclosed LTTE base which had amenities like electricity by local generators. Before being sent to another place for weapons training, the teenagers said, they were put on cleaning work during which they planned to escape.

Two of the escapees aged 18 were from Vipulananda Vidyalayam, in Pethale and the third one, who was19 years old was from Padiruppu Maha Vidyalayam in Kalawanchikudy, both in the Eastern Province. They said they were abducted from their homes June 14 and June 10 respectively. They said they started running away from the LTTE camp during the night of June 16 and hid themselves in the jungle until dawn. The government troops handed over the three to the Eravur Police. Eravur Police said they would be handed over to the next of kin. The next of kin and the Norway backed Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission were also informed about the surrender of the three.

Norway tries to break deadlock: June 18. Norway's envoy to Colombo, Hans Brattskar, today met the political wing leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), S.P. Tamilchelvan, and discussed a range of issues relating to the latest peace process in the rebel-held Kilinochchi.

The visit, a few days after Colombo sounded out a set of "temporary measures" to break the deadlock in the island's latest peace process, in diplomatic circles as "positive", reportedly touched upon several matters connected to the latest stalemate in the peace process and the recent incidents in Jaffna and the eastern seas.

The 15-month peace process has been stalled since April 21, after the Tigers unilaterally pulled out of negotiations and demanded a "politico-administrative" interim administrative structure, as proposed by its leadership.

The recent sinking of an LTTE merchant vessel, which the Sri Lankan Government said was carrying "war-link material", and Saturday's assassination of an anti-LTTE leader, Subathiran, in Government-held Jaffna were among the issues that reportedly figured in the meeting.

Colombo and the Tigers seriously differ on the circumstances leading to the sinking of the vessel. While Colombo says that the ship was sunk when it was on the island's EEZ, the Tigers claim that it was hit on international waters.

It is also understood that the Norwegian envoy would have taken up with the LTTE the recent assassination of EPRLF leader Subathiran for which the LTTE has been widely blamed..

Remand extended for LTTE area leader: June 19 - The LTTE's political leader for Putur, Batticaloa district, Mr. T. Satyaraj, who was arrested on June and remanded 6 until June 20, was further remanded for 14 days by the Batticaloa Magistrate, Abdul Gaffor when the case was taken up again today.

Kadirgamathamby Navasooriyam, a member of the paramilitary Razeek group, was killed by unidentified men on May 19, 2003 at 1 pm at a barber shop in Putur. Following this incident, Mr. Satyaraj was arrested on June 6 by a Sri Lankan government auxiliary force, and handed over to the police, and the police produced him before the Magistrate then, stating he was involved in the murder.

The LTTE has taken into custody two Sri Lanka policemen and has demanded that they will be released only if Mr. Satyaraj is released.

SLA constructs new camps & sentries: June 19 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) has commenced constructing new camps and sentries in Amban, Kudathanai and Manalkadu areas in Vadamarachchi division in Jaffna district. In Jaffna town, SLA started work on constructing checkpoints at Colombagam close to Third Cross Street. The SLA brought barbed wire rolls and other materials needed for the construction.

Grenade hurled at LTTE office: June 19 - Two unidentified men who came in a Hero Honda motorbike around seven today and lobbed a grenade inside the premises of the political office of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which is located along Wyman Road in Jaffna town.

However the grenade fell close to the Public Relation Office (PRO) of the LTTE inside the compound and did not explode. At that time members of the public and LTTE political activists were seated inside the PRO office, according LTTE sources. They said that the unidentified men who were riding the motorbike were seen wearing white colored helmets.

Members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) based in Jaffna immediately rushed to the site on being informed by LTTE political activists. SLMM monitors inspected the site and gathered information surrounding the incident, soufces said.

The attack on the LTTE Jaffna office comes amidst growing allegations by the rival EPDP and the EPRLF's Varathar wing that the Tigers are responsible for the killing of several of their members.

EPRLF leader cremated: June 19 - Meanwhile, the body of the slain EPRLF leader, T. Subathiran, was cremated at the general cemetery in the city today. Senior leaders from several Tamil and Sinhalese parliamentary parties and the comrades of the killed leader were among those who recalled the services rendered by Subathiran, to maintain the democratic traditions in the north and east.

The body of Subathiran, flown in from Jaffna where he was killed on 14 June by an "unidentified sniper'", was draped in the red and yellow flag of the EPRLF of which he was a member since 1983.

While speakers at the funeral oration recalled the services by Subathiran in resisting the LTTE, a world-wide appeal was also sent out by political parties urging the international community, the Sri

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Lankan President and the Prime Minister "to take all legitimate and necessary measures to prevent the terror of the LTTE aimed at silencing the voice of reason and dignity."

PM calls LTTE to discuss 'interim council': JUNE 19 - In yet another attempt to jump-start the stalled peace process, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, today called upon the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to hold discussions on an "interim administrative council".

The Prime Minister said the interim administrative council would be formed "in consultation with the Tigers" and would "also protect the interests of all communities," a Sinhala language text of his speech on television tonight said.

Laying the onus of resolving the crisis on the Tigers, Mr. Wickremesinghe said: "To resolve the present crisis and enter peace talks is the responsibility of the LTTE. I am confident they will honour their responsibility." Wickremesinghe also sought the active participation of the LTTE in carrying out reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the northern and eastern regions.

The offer by Mr. Wickremesinghe is the latest in a string of proposals Colombo had made since the LTTE unilaterally pulled out of talks on April 21.

On the issue of spending the monies pledged in the recent donors' conference in Tokyo, the Prime Minister assured that the amount earmarked for the reconstruction of the northeast would be spent only on that region and not elsewhere.

Neither the details of the LTTE's demand nor those of the Prime Minister's broad offer today are known yet. Initially Colombo had offered a "provisional administrative mechanism" for the development of the northeast, which the Tigers turned down as inadequate.

The Government had recently spelt out the idea of special commissioners and district development committees and hoped for a response from the Tigers. The LTTE's reaction is not yet known, but it was broadly along the lines of a development body, which the Tigers were not keen on accepting.

LTTE Rejects PMs new offer: June 20 - Turning down a call by the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, on 19 June to discuss an interim administrative mechanism, the LTTE wanted Colombo to spell out the details of the proposed structure to resume negotiations and said it would insist on a "radical overhaul" of the peace process with a "new, redefined agenda".

Reacting to the speech to the nation by Mr. Wickremesinghe, the LTTE said that the Prime Minister "has only repeated the statement he made at the Tokyo donor conference. This statement of intent, as we have already stated, cannot be a basis for negotiations," the LTTE's chief negotiator, Anton S. Balasingham was quoted as saying.

Colombo and the Tigers have serious differences over the manner in which an interim administrative mechanism should be formed. While the LTTE wants a politico-administrative structure outside the unitary constitution, all that the Wickremesinghe administration is able to offer is a development-oriented structure within the terms of the island's Constitution.

Anton Balasingham expected the Ranil Wickremesinghe government to submit an interim government plan to the two provinces with substantial Politico-administrative powers to the LTTE.

Balasingham further said, "Operating within the confines of an entrenched constitution and facing a hostile President, Ranil's administration is resistant to offer anything substantial in the form of an interim administration. Instead, the government is calling upon the LTTE to come up with a practical solution to draw up a mechanism."

However LTTE declined to put forward its own proposal. Sticking to the LTTE's position that any offer would have to come from Colombo, Mr. Balasingham said: "It is not prudent on the part of the LTTE to present a structure or a mechanism for an interim administrative set-up without any idea of the scope and extent to which the government could offer politico- administrative powers to the LTTE".

Balasingham further said, "We will insist on a radical overhaul of the entire peace process. We want a new, redefined agenda. We will discuss this matter with the Norwegian facilitators."

He reiterated that the Tigers were totally rejecting the guidelines set out in the Tokyo declaration as unacceptable and they would refuse it as a basis for future talks.

U.S. navy ship visits Colombo: June 20 - The United States Embassy in Colombo announced yesterday that an American navy ship, the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS O'Kane (DDG 77), arrived in Colombo.

During a routine port visit, crew members will have a chance to meet Sri Lankans, experience Sri Lankan culture, sightsee and enjoy Colombo's many attractions.

Commissioned in 1999, the USS O'Kane was named after Rear Admiral Richard H. O'Kane, a highly decorated World War II hero. The ship is based in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii and has a crew of approximately 350. The mission of the USS Kane is to be prepared to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea.

The USS O'Kane is under the command of United States Navy Commander Michael S. Viland who will pay his respects to senior Sri Lankan Navy officials during the ship's brief stay in Colombo.

No to Peace Awards: June 20 - "Sama Sewa", a peace oriented NGO of Anuradhapura, had planned to hold a function in Jaffna on June 21, to give awards to long-standing peace activists from all over the island including Jaffna. Jaffna University had agreed to give its famous Kailasapathy Hall for the function. But a LTTE-backed student group opposed the holding of the function in the university and threatened to disrupt the function if it was held. Under duress, the university backed out.

And as the organisers were trying to find another venue, the LTTE sent CVK Sivagnanam, a senior former civil servant, reportedly a staunch ally of the LTTE, to the houses of the awardees from Jaffna to "advice" them to avoid the function. The awardees from Jaffna are now in a quandary. Given the current belligerence of the LTTE, it remains to be seen if the function will ever be held in Jaffna at all.

Fear of LTTE prevents villagers' return: June 21 - The villagers of Mohineepuram in the Akkaraipattu police area who were ordered to move out by the LTTE on June 16 have still not returned due to fear of harassment by the Tigers, according news reports.

The reports said that only a few men have returned to the village while women have indicated their reluctance to return after the assault by armed LTTE cadres who stormed the village on motor cycles on June 16. Tigers had ordered them to vacate the village before 8.00 a.m. on the following day.

Three women who had been severely assaulted had complained to the Akkaraipattu police. They were given treatment at the Akkaraipattu district hospital for injuries.

Sources said the attack had been carried out by LTTE cadres who operated under the instructions of the LTTE Political Wing Leader in Ampara, 'Bawa', who is currently operating in Akkaraipattu 'engaging in political activities.'

Information received from the east said that the LTTE cadres involved in the incident had imposed a tax of Rs. 100 for one tractor-load of granite on Muslim businessmen in the area.

PA to open for talks with LTTE?: June 21 - As the deadlock in the relations between Ranil Wickremesinghe's government and the LTTE continue, rumors are rife among well-informed circles in Colombo that channels of communication have opened up between the opposition Peoples Alliance led by President Kumaratunga, and

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Robert, the Mighty Fighter

D B S Jeyaraj

"My son is 46 years old but refuses to marry because he has dedicated himself to the upliftment of our Tamil people. Whenever I press him to marry he laughs it off saying that he is already married to the Tamil nation," 72 year old Ratnammah Thambirajah, seated on a leather armchair at her residence in Toronto was repeating these words to the steady stream of visitors calling on her to express their sympathies over the killing of her son Thambirajah Subathiran alias Robert in Jaffna on June 14th.

A native of Udupiddy and resident of Nunavil in Chavakachcheri she was now in Canada where her only daughter Thavarajini Balakumar was living. The old woman who had earlier in Sri Lanka lost her brother and husband, both retired Police officers to the TELO and LTTE respectively, was now deprived of her only son but seemed unaware that she had lost him.

"How many times I asked him to leave his politics and come here. I told him to go anywhere in the world and that I will send him the money for it. I even offered to set up a business for him in India if he left politics. But he refused saying that he can't desert his people and movement", she kept on saying. Even as the widowed mother went on and on about her son many visitors over the week-end realised that she was still ignorant that Subathiran had died. Ratnammah had only been told that her son had been shot and injured so as to spare her a terrible shock. The idea was to break the news gently in stages.

Ratnammah had tuned in to a Toronto based Tamil radio and heard that her son had been killed. He had been assassinated allegedly by a LTTE gunman. She did not believe it. "They have got it wrong. They announced that my son is dead. He is not dead only wounded. He will recover when I go to him," she told a friend who listened with tears welling up in her eyes.

Ratnammah and Thavarajini left Canada on Monday June 16th for Colombo. The Sri Lankan consulate in Toronto opened up specially for half an hour on Sunday June 15th to issue an emergency travel document to Ratnammah enabling her to go to Sri Lanka. The cremation was on Thursday June 19th at the Hindu section of Kanatte cemetery.

Large crowds paid their respects as Subathiran's body lay in the Jayaratne funeral parlour at Borella. Many politicians and journalists were present at the funeral. Earlier his body lay in state at the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front office at Hospital road, Jaffna. The EPRLF office as well as the EPDP office at Stanley Road blared mournful music over loudspeakers. Various statements expressing condolences and condemnation over the killing were issued.

Subathiran born on Dec 24th 1957 was educated at Jaffna Central and Manipay Hindu Colleges. His father Thambapillai Thambirajah was a retired Police sub - inspector hailing from Nunavil East in Chavakachcheri, His mother born in Udupiddy was the sister of former ASP Kuttipillai Kumar.

The retired Police officer had crossed the path of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization led by the legendary Thangathurai alias Thanganna. The TELO was determined to kill Kumar who always carried a gun for his protection. It was known however that Kumar being a devout Hindu did not carry a gun on Fridays. He was buying plantains at the market for his grand daughter on a Friday when Jegan of the TELO closed in on him. Kumar's hand

(continued on next page)

(Continued from page 33)

the LTTE.

Categorically denying recent news reports here that a member of the LTTE had met its MPs, the spokesman, Sarath Amunugama, told a press conference: "as a democratic party any citizen of this country has every right to talk to us". The denial came in the wake of reports that the head of the LTTE's peace secretariat, Pulidevan, had recently met PA Matara district parliamentarian Mangala Samaraweera and Kandy District Parliamentarian Sarath Amunugama in Colombo. Flatly denying any such meeting had taken place, Dr. Amunugama said, "When and if we do start talking to the LTTE we will let the country be informed."

Anandasangaree removed from TNA: June 21 - The President of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) ,V. Anandasagaree has been removed from the working committee of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), a coalition of Tamil political parties in which the TULF is the main component. Another parliamentarian from the Eastern Province Joseph Pararajasingham has been named to replace V. Anandasagaree.

The working committee of the TNA comprises of three representatives from each of the constituent parties: TULF, All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) , Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), and a breakaway group led by Suresh of the Eelam People's Revolutionary liberation Front.

The 'TamilNet' website, which normally reflects the LTTE viewpoint, reported, "Anandasangari has been facing a challenge to his leadership due to his publicized opposition to the LTTE."

Quoting a TULF parliamentarian, Mavi Senathiraja the report said the TULF leader was removed from the TNA working committee since he failed to attend several meetings of the working committee. V. Anandasagaree, a veteran in Tamil politics, was the most popular candidate at the last general elections polling the highest number of preferential votes of 36,217, in the District of Jaffna, the main home of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

PM heads for London: June 22 - Peace broker Norway is set for a fresh attempt to revive Sri Lanka's faltering peace process after a string of setbacks threatened to return the island to war, officials and diplomats said in Colombo. According to them, Norwegian diplomats were due to hold talks with the London-based Tamil Tiger negotiator, Anton Balasingham, on moves to end the deadlock in the peace process.

"There was some concern at one point that the Tigers were not interested in Norwegian facilitation, but the recent statements have indicated that they still envisage a role for Oslo," a diplomatic source said.

Officials said Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe who is visiting London from Sunday 22 June was also likely to hold talks with British Prime Minister and with Norwegians involved in the peace process.

Reports from Colombo said Government's chief negotiator G. L. Peiris was in London with the Prime Minister and the two were expected to hold talks with Norwegian deputy foreign minister Vidar Helgesen.

The main opposition People's Alliance of President Chandrika Kumaratunga said the government was making one offer after the other to appease the Tigers but there were no signs of a "clear policy."

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(Continued from page 34)

went instinctively into his pocket reaching for a gun that was not there. Kumar's hand came out with a hankerchief that fluttered briefly as Jegan gunned him down.

Subathirans family was affected in both the 1977 and 1983 Communal violence. Thambirajah was on duty elsewhere when his house in Kalutara was attacked by mobs. Ratnammah escaped by hiding in a Muslim neighbours house. All their belongings were burnt. Ratnamma relocated to Jaffna but Thambirajah continued to serve in the South, In 1983 he was assaulted by mobs in Kirillapone with some fellow Sinhala Policemen collaborating. After discharge from Hospital the disgusted Policeman retired from the force and went home to Jaffna.

Their troubles did not end. The PLOTE took over their house in Udupiddy given as dowry. So they moved to Thambirajahs house in Nunavil. The LTTE later took over the Udupiddy house and made it a camp. In 1987 during the Vadamaratchy operation led by Denzil Kobbekaduwe the Udupiddy house being an LTTE base was destroyed.

It was amid these circumstances that Subathiran acquired militant tendencies as a student.. He joined the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES) that went on to form the nucleus of the EPRLF. He had a charismatic personality and was able to recruit a large number of youngsters to the movement. Though the EPRLF was conducting a well planned political program the 1983 violence and consequent Indian involvement compelled that movement to embark upon a militarisation process.

Subathiran took the pseudonym Robert and underwent military training at the EPRLF camp in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu. He did not receive Direct Indian training at Uttar Pradesh. Robert however soon became the EPRLF Commander for Jaffna while Douglas Devananda was overall chief of the Peoples Liberation Army, the military wing of the EPRLF.

Robert and Ramesh were responsible for the EPRLF's successful heist of the Jaffna Post Office amounting to around 11 lakhs. He was also involved in the Chankanai bank robbery. Robert also led the attack on the Kilinochchi Police Station and participated in the abortive attack on Karainagar Naval base led by Sinnavan under the direction of Douglas.

In 1985 Robert was traveling on a motor cycle with another cadre Kumar and traveling along Beach road Gurunagar, Jaffna, by the army cantonment when soldiers recognized Kumar. They fired and killed Kumar while Robert was captured. His importance however was not realised and Subathiran spent more than two years in detention at Gurunagar, Palaly, Elephant Pass and Boosa. He along with his close friend Sritharan alias Sugu were released after the Indo - Lanka accord.

Robert followed the EPRLF line faithfully during the IPKF period and at one point was nominated as a Provincial Councillor. His father Thambirajah worked as security supervisor under the Provincial Council. An LTTE plot to kill some important EPRLF Provincial councillors was foiled by Thambirajah. This led to him being marked by the Tigers. Robert's father Thambirajah was seized by the LTTE on Nov 11th 1989. Eyewitnesses saw him struggling and kicking his captors and the vehicle.

The LTTE informed Robert's mother that her husband was being interrogated. In May 1990 Thambirajah's mother died. His wife entreated the LTTE to release him so that he could perform the last rites according to custom. The Tigers then told her that her husband had tried to escape from custody by wresting a gun from his guards and had been killed in the fracas. He was cremated on Nov 17th 1989 at Madduvil, the Tigers told her.

Robert meanwhile fled Sri Lanka with other EPRLF cadres after the IPKF withdrew. He went to Orissa and was leader of a refugee camp there. His mother Ratnammah having lost her husband and being parted from her son became an openly defiant critic of the LTTE. The Tigers in 1992 took her by force on a boat to India and left her there. It was an "expulsion" form of punishment. She was reunited with her son in Madras and later returned to Colombo from where she went to Canada.

Robert returned in the mid-nineties to Sri Lanka. After the armed forces recaptured Jaffna, he returned to Jaffna and commenced political work. The excesses of certain EPRLF sections during the IPKF period had alienated the movement from the people. It was due to the untiring efforts of Robert who apologized publicly for past excesses that the EPRLF re-established itself in Jaffna again. The 1998 local authority polls saw the party win seats on several councils. It got 15% of the total vote. Robert was elected Jaffna Municipal Councillor.

The EPRLF split after the return of Varadarajapperumal. Robert remained with the Varathan faction and became its deputy leader. He was virtually its head as Perumal, because of the threat to his life from the Tigers, spent most of his time in India. Robert was also a tower of strength to the Jaffna municipal council and supported the TULF administration in the face of LTTE threats.

In spite of danger, he refused to go to Colombo and remained in Jaffna, rallying EPRLF cadres. Maintaining cordial relations with moderate politicians of all hues Robert strove manfully to keep the EPRLF afloat amid turbulent political waters. He never lost sight of the original goal of Tamil emancipation but moderated it now to the vision of regional autonomy along with democracy, pluralism and enforcement of human rights. Though having bade a firm farewell to arms and the Eelam dream Robert continued to remain what he was essentially - a mighty fighter for the rights of Tamils - until the very end.

(Continued from page 36)

latter succeeded Bishop Deogupillai to Jaffna in 1992.

In October 1995 when 500,000 people moved out of Jaffna and the city became a ghost-town, after weeks of bombing and artillery shelling, in spite of many exhorting him to move to better places, he stayed put in Jaffna along with his Secretary Rev.Fr.Selvarajah in Jaffna. It was an eloquent sign of his deep conviction that whatever happens Jaffna belongs to him and he belongs to Jaffna. Thus the last eleven years of his life were spent again at St. Martin's Minor Seminary, Jaffna where at the age of eleven, before 75 years, he started his ecclesiastical life.

Bishop Deogupillai is gone out of sight, but his clarion call to a life of faith and courage will continue to ring loud and clear among a people still struggling for the light of the day. The man who lives by the Truth comes into the Light.

- Fr. S.J.Emmanuel,
Germany 26.04.03

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Bishop Deogupillai

A man of sturdy faith and courageous leadership

Thousands of old boys from many of the catholic colleges in the North of Sri Lanka will gratefully remember Bishop Deogupillai as their great teacher, guide and disciplinarian and numerous priests, religious and people from the three catholic dioceses of Jaffna, Mannar and Trinco-Batti will proudly salute him as their courageous leader of faith in their turbulent times. He stood tall, erect and fearless among his colleagues and contemporaries and among friends and foes The disciplined faith and character imbibed from his family and through his formation in renowned catholic institutions, at home and abroad, stood him in good stead to make him a Teacher par excellence and a Leader courageous and outspoken for the times.

Bastiampillai Deogupillai was born into a large catholic family in Kayts – named Esthaaki family- a title earned by his father Bastiampillai for his role of Esthaaki in a country-drama (Naaduk Koorththu). When a European missionary expressed his wish that the youngest son Deogupillai in the family could turn out to be a good priest, the father bluntly retorted " so, you ask him first and then come to me". Young Deogupillai was one of the youngest among the minor-seminarians of his time. Cradled in the traditional catholic faith, educated and disciplined in the traditions of the catholic colleges in Jaffna - St.Antony's College of Kayts and St.Patrick's College of Jaffna - formed and ordained as a priest in Rome in 1941, he worked for over five decades as a Priest and Bishop in filial obedience to God and his church till the last days of his retirement in 1992.

After a brilliant academic career at the then Propaganda College (now Urbanian University), back at home he obtained his Bachelor of Arts from the London University and the Diploma in education from the Ceylon University. He served as Rector of. three Catholic colleges of the then Jaffna Dioceses – St.Joseph's College, Anuradhapura, Sacred Heart Colleges, Karaveddy and St. Henry's College, Illavalai. and the Tamil Teachers' Training College, Colombogam. With the transition of the Training College into government hands in 1961, he resigned as Rector and opted to serve as Parish Priest in Illavalai.

In 1967 he was called to be Bishop-Auxiliary to Bishop Ignatius Glennie SJ of Trincomalee. After a few years of episcopal experience, he succeeded Bishop Emilianuspillai in 1971 as the first Diocesan Bishop of Jaffna. A greater part of his Episcopal leadership in Jaffna was conditioned by the turbulent times of the seventies and eighties, both for the church as well as for the country.

He was preceded by a well known Bishop Jerome Emilianuspillai OMI, who with a clear vision and a practical mind made quick moves (he had played soccer for the Ceylon University team), to suit the transition from colonialism to independence and from white missionary service to indigenous clergy. Before the Second Vatican Council in which he participated came to a close, he had opened up new missions into the jungles of Wanni, initiated boldly the services of the laity, and laid the foundations for the future of a local church with an indigenous clergy. Thus Bishop Deogupillai, took advantage of his Roman education to interpret faithfully the Documents of the Second Vatican Council and build on the foundations of his predecessor.

On the one side, he was called to use his Roman mindset to discern scrupulously the strong winds of change attributed to Vatican II , and guide the people so as not "to disturb the faith of the people". He was called to be a firm Teacher of orthodoxy exhorting his priests and religious, and if necessary warning them, to remain steadfast in faith and in obedience to Rome .

On the other side, he had genuine compassion for all the Tamil people, be they Hindus, Muslims or Christians - suffering injustice in the hands of the government and its forces. He saw the people torn between two forms of leadership - a weak leadership of the elected MPs and a growing militant leadership of the Tamil youth. The courage of his convictions made him a fearless leader speaking up from within the borders of his office. To the VIPs who visited him, whether it be a Prime Minister like Mr.Premadasa or a foreign diplomat, he was an outspoken and uncompromising leader. Though he had his personal convictions and openly and fearlessly stated the grievances of his people, both among his colleagues and in public, he almost prohibited the clergy, in deference to the teachings of the Holy See, from getting involved in the politics of the day and advocated an apolitical stance limited to humanitarian aid for the suffering. He called a spade a spade and was incapable of any double-talk.

Being a historian and an educationist for a greater part of his life, he encouraged his clergy to study the history of the church as well as of the tradition and cultures of the Tamil people.

He had already imbibed from his family a preferential love for the arts and cultures. He went a long way to promote the initiatives of Rev.Fr.N.M.Saverimuttu through his Centre for Performing Arts and others who tried to preserve Tamil drama . In recognition of his services to the heritage of the Tamil people, the Jaffna University conferred on him an honorary doctorate . Even in his advancing age, he would entertain visitors with his singing of Tamil lyrics called Ammanai

The work his predecessor initiated for the diocesan clergy, was taken further by his sending many priests abroad for higher education. One of his courageous achievements was the establishment of St.Francis Xavier's Major Seminary at Columbuthura i , Jaffna for the education of priests from the Tamil dioceses of Jaffna, Mannar and Trinco-Batticaloa. The ethnic situation and the questionable safety of Tamil students in Kandy hastened his vision for the future and made him establish the Philosophate in Jaffna in 1981, which later became St.Francis Xavier's Major Seminary, affiliated to the Urban University in Rome.

Realising that the diocese was too extensive for better pastoral care, he advocated the birth of new dioceses, first in handing over the Anuradhapura region to the Oblates under the leadership of Bishop Joy Gunawardene OMI and then creating the Mannar diocese with sufficient clergy and its first Bishop – the present Bishop Savundranayagam. The

(continued on page 35)

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About People and Events

OBITUARIES

Mr. Elayathamby Canagalingam, *retired Principal, Teachers' Training College, Palaly, Jaffna; beloved husband of the late Kamalasany; loving father of Tharmini (Sri Lanka), and Sukanthini (Singapore); father-in-law of Sivasothy (Srilanka) and Pirabaharan (Singapore); grandfather of Lakshini, Nirushini, Kesikan and Pranukan; brother of late Kanagambikai and late Sabalingam (Emeritus Principal, Jaffna Hindu College); uncle of Mahendraraj , Theivendraraj and Poovanendraraj (all of Malaysia), Dr. Jothilingam (UK), Katpahambikai (Malaysia), Jegathambikai (UK), late Uthayalingam, Uthayakumari (Bahrain), Jeyalingam, Abeyalingam and Kalaichelvi (all of UK) passed away in Colombo on 13th May 2003 and the cremation took place at the Kanatte Crematorium, Borella on 14th May.*
The members of the family wish to thank all friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and helped them in several ways during the period of bereavement –"Kurinji", Millfield Lane, Hitchin, Herts SG4 7NH, UK.

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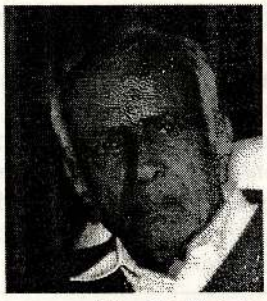
Mrs Valliammai Seenivasagam; *beloved wife of late Mr. S. Seenivasagam; loving mother of Chandrasegaram, Rajasegaram, Gnanasegaram, Balasegaram, Selvaranee, Ponnampalam, Gunasegaram, Prema Ranee and Kulasegaram; loving mother-in-law of Jeyalakshimi, Vickneswari, Balambikai, Sakunthala, Palasanthiran,Gnanamalar, Ranjana and Mahendran; loving sister of Thangamuthu Nagalingham and Ponnampalam Nadarajah passed away peacefully in Malaysia on 28th April 2003, the cremation took place at Petaling Jeya crematorium on 29th April 2003.*

The family wish to thank all those who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy during this difficult time.- 7 Jalan 5/3, Petaling Jeya, West Malaysia. Tel: 03-77825017 (Malaysia) / 65 Beaminster Gardens, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 2BW. Tel: 020 8550 9972.(UK)

In Memoriams

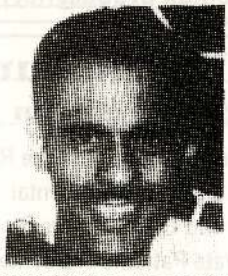
Anniversary Remembrance



In cherished memory of ***Mr. Chelliah Paramananthan (Mallie)*** *on the third anniversary of his passing away on 3 June 2000.*

Affectionately remembered by his sons, daughter, daughters-in-law, son-in-law and grandchildren.

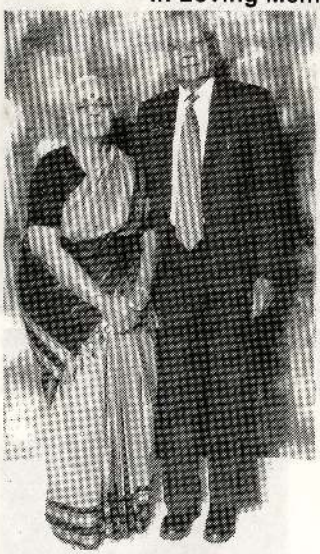
Twelfth Death Anniversary



In ever loving memory of ***Balasubramaniam Sivagananathan*** *on the twelfth anniversary of his passing away on 22nd June 1991.*

Remembered with love and affection by his step mother Mrs Rajaletchumy Balasubramaniam (Australia); wife Kamala (Sri Lanka); brothers Dr. Sivaloganathan (UK), Thirunavukkarasu (Australia),Radhakrishnan (Chennai) and Sritharan (Australia); sisters Mrs Gowri Pathmanathan, Mrs Bhagawathy Mohanadas (both of Sri Lanka), Mrs Mangayarkkarasi Jetheenndran and Mrs Jayanthi Kumaranayagam (both of Australia). – 22 Oakwood Drive, St. Albans, Herts. Tel: 01727 853331.

In Loving Memory of our



Amma:
Rattinam Selvanayaki
Born: 04.09.1920
Rest: 09.05.2001

Aiyah:
Sayambunather Vyramuttu Rattinam
Born; 30.03.1922
Rest: 09.07.1997

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by sons Pathmanathan, Ramanathan, and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumy and Thanaledchumi; grandchildren Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthooran, Bhavan, Kugan, Asha-Vidthya and Sathian; great grand daughters Krishni and Vishala – 3 The Orchard, Wickford, Essex SS12 0HB,UK. Tel: (01268) 766624.

Fourth Anniversary Remembrance

In ever loving and precious memory of ***Mrs Rasathy Thirunavukkarasu****, daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs Ambalavanar of Suthumalai, Sri Lanka on the fourth anniversary of her passing away on 4.7.99.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her beloved husband Thirunavukkarasu, daughters Vasuki, and Dr. Vatsala;sons-in-law Pathmalingam and Suresh; grand children Thusan, Shiva and Suji; brothers Dr. Ponnambalam (Melbourne, Australia), Sritaran and their families. – 28 Foxmead Close, Enfield, Middx EN2 7JG. Tel: 0208 363 0922.

FORTHCOMINGS EVENTS

July1 *Feast of St. Oliver*
2 *Feast of Our Lady of Madhu*
3 *Saint Manickavasagar Guru Pooja*
4 *Feast of St. Elizebeth of Portugal*
5 *Shashti*
6 *Aani Uththaram*
10 *Sukkla Eekathasi*
11 *Pirathsam; Feast of St. Bernedict, Patron Saint of Europe*
12 *Wimbledon Shree Ghanapathy Temple Annual Festival commences with Kodietham*
13 *Full Moon; Highgatehill Murugan Temple Ther Thiruvizha (Car Festival)*
14 *Theertham Thiruvizla (Water cutting Ceremony)*
15 *Murugan Temple Poongavanam; Feast of St. Bonaventure*
16 *Bairavar Madai ; Sankadakara Sathurthi; Feast of Our Lady of Carmel*
21 *Feast of St. Laurence of Brindisi*
22 *Aadi Sevvai 1*
23 *Karthigai; Feast of St. Bridget*
24 *Krishna Eekathasi*
25 *Feast of St. James*
26 *Pirathosam*
28 *Aadi Amavasai*
29 *Aadi Sevvai 2; Feast of St. Martha*
31 *Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola*

At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0207 381 3086 / 4608. Website: WWW.bhavan.net.

Jul 4 *7.30 p.m. 'Vanaprastharam', a new play in English, written and directed by Parasuram Ramamoorthi*

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Book Review

Customs and Cultures of Sri Lanka

Author: G.Amirthalingam

Published by A & S Books, London. Feb.2003, 200pp ISBN 0954003705
Web: http://www.ASBooks.net

Reviewed by R.Canagaratnam

To one who loves books more than anything else in life, the complimentary copy of the latest book on "Customs and Cultures of Sri Lanka" written by G.Amirthalingam came as a surprising windfall. At a glance I could see that among its pages I was in for a pleasant treat on the history and heritage, customs and tradition, religious rites and ceremonies etc. of the people of Sri Lanka. So, I opened the book with expectation; all the sapid items in desired quantum were present and hardly any insipid morsel to carp at. And it was with delight and profit that I closed the book.

I think the author must have had a synoptic view of the whole theme before he ventured to write the book. How else could he have culled and collated the data relating to different aspects of the multi-racial and multi-religious Sri Lankan society? He does not tax the reader with a plethora of historical data but the entire gamut of over 2500 years of history is covered in a few pages. The controversial issues, such as, who inhabited the island at the outset have been met with a disarming smile as it were so that neither the majority community nor the minority community would take umbrage. It requires a great sense of objectivity and truthfulness to relate the information about other races and religions without any bias.

The day to day habits and customs, the religious observances, the festivals and ceremonies etc. of the people have been narrated in such cogency and readability that the chapters are comparable to a garland of flowers of many hues. All the same, the distinctive features of the different communities namely Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays and Burghers are delineated in detail. The effects on the society because of colonisation by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British have been given clear explanation.

The free flow of style and absence of jargon make the reading a pleasant journey. The printing and get up of the book with an attractive cover that depicts Sri Lanka as the veritable tear-drop on the brow of Indian sub continent is commendable. The work is sure to find a generous welcome in the hands of not merely Sri Lankans but also those interested to know about the Sri Lanka's history and heritage and its cultures and traditions.

It may not be out of place here to mention that an illustrious ancestor of the author wrote the magnum opus, "The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago" in the 1903 and opened the eyes of the West to the greatness and glory of the Tamils. The present work coming exactly after a century would serve as a mine of information relating to the heritage of the people of Sri Lanka.

Your roots... your background... your motherland
You need this book

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by
G.Amirthalingam

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Book Review

Hon'ble Mr. Conscience Handy Perinpanayagam
By Sahayamani T. Visvanathan

This booklet is a biographical sketch of the life and times of a colourful personality – Handy Perinpanayagam. Drawing on the close association with him, it dwells on the multi-faceted role played by "Handy Master" as he was affectionately known to his large circle of co-workers and friends. He is described in these roles as a teacher par excellence, a pioneer freedom fighter and an advocate of social reform. In all his activities, the booklet brings out the sterling qualities of the man admired and respected by many for the principled stand he took on issues of the day – be it educational, political or social.

In his early years as an exceptionally bright student and seeker of knowledge at Jaffna College, followed by a teaching stint at his Alma Mater, Mr Handy Perinpanayagam had displayed qualities of leadership. His close association with Rev. Bicknell, the Principal who was his mentor and friend helped him see through many of his cherished actions. At the same time he had gained recognition at the Northern Province Teachers' Association (NPTA) and All Ceylon Union of Teachers (ACUT) which institutions he went on to head. He was thus available to influence the educational policy of the country as well as advance the interests of his fellow teachers. He returned to teaching after a break when he accepted the Principalship of Kokuvil Hindu College. Within a short space of time, he was able with his colleagues to raise this institution to become one of the premier colleges in Jaffna.

On the political front, he was largely instrumental in getting Mahatma Gandhi to visit Jaffna in 1927. As a follower of Gandhi, he sought to simulate the Indian Independence Movement when he

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(Continued from page 39)

launched the Youth Congress and pioneered the call for 'Poorna Swaraj' or full independence for the country. He initially founded the Youth Congress to discuss the issues of the day, as his primary concern was the economic and social upliftment of the masses through Poorna Swaraj. This led to Jaffna's boycott of the First State Council Elections in 1931 under the Donoughmore

Constitution. Jaffna thus led the country at that time for full independence. Though his call had support across the country from a galaxy of stalwarts, it showed that Mr.

Handy Perinpanayagam was ahead of his times. In his social reforms, he is best remembered for his fight to remove the curse of untouchability in Jaffna society as well as to counter the rising tide of westernisation. From a young age, he thus donned the national dress.

In many of his actions, as the booklet describes, Mr. Handy Perinpanayagam had the support of his peers as seen from the tributes paid to him by them. It clearly shows that he belonged to that rare breed of men who stood tall as he served with distinction the wider community that was Sri Lanka in those days and not just the Tamils. It is indeed timely that as the country embarks on a peace process, the life of such a stalwart be remembered, who fought his battles irrespective of race or creed. The author needs to be commended for publishing this work.

N. Parameswaran
Australia

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3. *Mr. V. Selvanayagam, 7/1, 1/1 Joseph Lane, Colombo 4, Sri Lanka.*
4. *Mr. N. Sri Ranganathan, 14 Sree Vengadesan Veethy, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.*
5. *Ratnam Foundation, 179 Norval Road, North Wembly, HA0 3SX, UK.*
6. *Sri, 186 Sylvan St., Rutherford NJ 07070, USA. Tel: 201-438-4331*

Wedding Bells

We congratulate
the following couples
on their recent wedding.

Selvachandran, *son of Mr. & Mrs Ramachandran of Sangarapillai Road, Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka and* ***Piratheepa*** *daughter of Mr.& Mrs Arasaratnam of Puttur West, Navakkiri, Sri Lanka on 25th May 2003 at "Sivayogam Wedding Hall", Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 &EJ.*

Thamotharan, *son of Mr. & Mrs Kumarasamy of Uyarapulam, Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka and* ***Shiyamala,*** *daughter of Mr.& Mrs Thurairajah, Thevalaya Road, Varani, Sri Lanka on 11th June 2003 at Hotel Sapphire Wedding Hall, Galle Road, Colombo 6.*

Dr. Prathipun, *son of Dr. & Mrs Arumugaraasah of 19 Hitherwood Drive, Dulwich, London SE19 1XA and* ***Dr. Aneeta,*** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tharmakulasingam of 17 Wellesley Road, London W4 4BS on 15th June 2003 at Novotel London West Hotel, 1 Shortland, London W6 8BR.*

Jamie, *son of Mr. & Mrs. Whitehorn of Lower Farm House, Milton-U-Wychwood, Oxford OX7 6EX and* ***Saraswathy,*** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs Sabanathan of 45 Marlands Road, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex IG5 0JL. on 15th June 2003 at Praba Banqueting Suite, High Road, Ilford, Essex.*

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All proceeds to Charities in North and East Sri Lanka.
Tickets Temple: 0208348 9835 and 01277 223981 (Dr. Navaratnam)

Ontario Senior Tamils' Centre

The Annual General Meeting of Ontario Senior Tamils' Centre was held on 17th May 2003 at the Oriole Community Centre, Don Mills with over 275 members in attendance.

The out-going president Mrs Ratnes Sanmuganathan in her address outlined a plan to initiate action to build a Long Term Care Centre for Senior Tamils in Ontario. She further stated that she looked forward to the Tamil Professionals and Tamil business leaders in Canada to take up the challenging task.

The following are the new officials for the year 2003/2004. ***President:*** *Mr. M. Velauthapillai,* ***Vice President:*** *Mrs Bhavani Sivaramalingam,* ***Secretary:*** *Mrs. Maya Kandiah,* ***Treasurer:*** *Mr. S.Siva Jeyanathan,* ***Asst. Treasurer:*** *Mrs Thanam Tharmalingam,* ***Board Members:*** *Messers. Rajan Dominic, A. Balasubramaniam, M. Jeganathan, T. Sivararah, K. Rathinasingam, R.L. Xavier, S.M. J. Emmanuel, S. Anandamoorthy* ***Editor:*** *Mr. E. Thevaseervatham,* ***Past President:*** *Mrs Ratnes Sanmuganathan,* ***Auditor:*** *Mr. Logan Senathirasa, C.A., C.M.A.*

Tamil Performing Arts Society
Silver Jubilee Performances

Tamil Performing Arts Society, a well known Tamil Theatre group from London is performing a Tamil Drama Festival in Germany to mark their Silver Jubilee. This is their second Drama Festival this year as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. The first festival was held in East London last February. They are performing four of their plays in four different venues within a four week period (5th July - 2nd August) including the one in Germany. This is a mammoth task and would be a great achievement for an amateur Tamil Theatre Group functioning in London.

This unique group consisting of actors, musicians, dancers and theatre technicians under thespian Balendra has been staging before expatriate audiences in Britain, France, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and even in distant places Australia and Canada, winning plaudit from the Tamil scholar, the late Mr. Sivapathasundaram about the dedication of this voluntary group

TPAS will perform three of their well known plays ' Kannadi Varpukal' (The Glass Managerie), 'Verukkul Peium Malai' and 'Sampantham' at St. Albertus Magnus Kirche, Enscheder Str. 13, Dortmund, Germany on 19th July 2003. The members of the group travelling to Germany include Anandarani Balendra, Mano Manuelpillai, S. Santhagunan, P. Sathiyendran, S. Vasudevan, V. Sivasuthan, Dharshini

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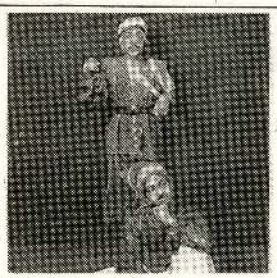

Ganeshapillai and Saritha Annathurai.

TPAS's new production 'Ontru Paddaal Undu Vaaalvu', a children's play depicting the theme 'Unity is Strength' with 27 children from Brent Tamil School will be staged on 6th July 2003, at Beck Theatre, Grange Road, Hayes, Middx. This production is based on Prof. S. Sivsasegeram's script and directed by K. Balendra and assisted by Anandarani Balendra. The children are trained through Theatre games to perform in Tamil. They develop cultural awareness, identity, creativity, leadership, teamwork and personal development such as confidence, self esteem and good discipline through the techniques of story telling, role playing , trust and awareness. The music for this play is composed and conducted by S. Anandanadesan, P. Sathiyendran, S. Balasubramaniam, Vijayakumari Paramakumaran , M. Sathiamoorthy and M. Sivarajah. The costumes are designed by Eswaran Selvarajah from Boston. This play will be performed at TAB's function 'Kalai Kathampam' along with orchestral music and dances.

The other performance by this drama group is scheduled for 6th July 2003 at Wembley High School Hall for Manipay Hindu College OBA and on 2nd August at Beck Theatre for Kambamalai School Alumni Association. The plays performed are 'Verukkul Peiyum Malai' and ' Kannadi Varpugal'

A young and enthusiastic group of people waiting impatiently in the wings for the cue coupled with experienced directors, willing sponsors and potentially adventurous audience – the cast seems well equipped to treat its audience to sterling performances. For more details please telephone 020 8422 2859.

Ramanathan Honoured in Canada

Mr. V. R. Ramanathan, Silver Jubilee Year President of the Saiva Muneeta Sangam (UK), President, Mahajana College Old Students' Association (UK) and livewire of several other Saivite and Tamil educational organisations in the UK was honoured with the Tamils' Information Award by the Tamils of Canada in recognition of his dedication and outstanding contribution to the Tamil Community and life long service to Saivaism in Sri Lanka and the UK. The presentation was made at a well attended meeting held on 16th February 2003 at City Hall, Toronto, Canada. The occasion was also the Twelfth Anniversary Celebrations of Canada Tamils' Information.

The Alongside is picture of the presentation of the award to Mr. Ramanathan by Mr. John McKay, Canadian Member of Parliament for Scarborough East to convey the appreciation of the Tamils of Canada.

Mr. Ramanathan has been honoured in the past by several other organisations.. A few of them appear below.

On 12th December 1993, he received the title of "Saiva Thurantharar" from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Hindu Cultural Affairs.

On 23rd September 1996, he was awarded the title of "Sivaneri Kavalar" at the Annual Sessions of the World Saiva Council held in Durban, South Africa.

On 1st April 2000, the title of "Sivaneri Semmal" was conferred on him by the London Sivayogam Trust

On 17th December 2000 the Colombo Sri Sivasubramania Seva Fund Trustrees honoured him in Sri Lanka with the title of "Thondar Thillagam".

We congratulate Mr. Ramanathan on the awards he had received in the past in recognition of his selfless service to the community and wish him several more years of continued success.

Tamil Lawyers' Association (TLA) UK

At the Annual General Meeting of the TLA held on 4th May 2003 at Royal Club, Ruislip Road, Greenford the following office bearers were elected.

President: Ponnampalam Arul, **Vice Presidents:** C. Sithamparapillai & K. P. Nathan, **Gen. Secretary;** T. Yoganathar, **Treasurer:** P. Satchithananthan (Mrs), **Asst. Secretary:** P. Nathan, **Executive Committee Members:** Wimal Sockanathan, S. D. Ratnasingam, S. Yogarajah, S.A. Joseph and A. Rajakariar, **Sports Committee:** S. Sriskanthalingam, S. Sathananthan, **Head of Constitional Reform Committee:** Mr. C.Sriskantharajah

(Continued from page 21)

the bizarre sideshow of the LTTE's well publicised binge murdering democratic opponents, and civilians, did not appear to dampen their enthusiasm or the strength of their entreaties. All this pleading did not help to allay the LTTE's fears that someone, at the Tokyo Conference, might extract from it a pledge, even a merely formal one, to respect democracy and human rights. Against that risk, even the prospect of Tokyo's multimillion dollar cheques turned sour.

The signs are that the carnival is coming to a close and the country faces, barring a miraculous reprieve, the terrible cruelties of war. Tolerating human rights abuses by the LTTE in various forms during the process has not yielded any opening for the people to assert their will. It rather reinforced totalitarian control so that the LTTE may once more force the people towards a war they do not want.

The question is whether, even at this extremity, the international community is prepared to make people and their well-being central to the process? Has the Government, which created a nightmare in the name of peace, learnt enough to deal with what is coming without inflicting further horrors on the Tamil people? Does the Opposition command the statesmanship to be restrained in its quest for power, and to guide the Government through the initial crisis while ensuring that the ordinary Tamil citizen is treated with fraternal concern? ❐

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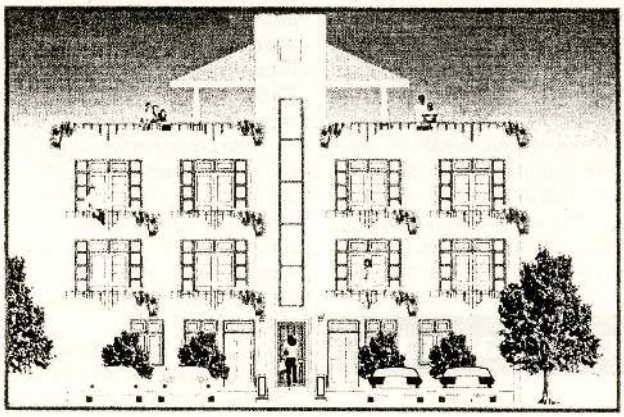

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